The Hon.ble Robert Boyle.

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SOME

MOTIVES AND INCENTIVES To the LOVE of GOD.

Pathetically Discours'd of in a LETTER to a Friend.

By the Honourable
ROBERT BOYLE.

The Eighth Edition, Corrected.

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Let us consider one another, to provoke unto Love.

In the SAVOY:
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TO THE COUNTESS OF WARWICK.

My Dear Sister,

I Expect you should somewhat wonder, that after having for above Eleven Years been careful to keep this following Letter from the Publick View, and that too notwithstanding the Solicitation (not to say Importunity) of divers Illustrious Persons, and even Your Commands to release it from its Confinement; I should now at length give way to its passing abroad into the World, and its making you a publick and solemn Address. Wherefore judging my self oblig'd to give you an account of a Paper, for which you have been long pleas'd so highly and so obligingly to concern your self, I must, to remove your wonder, inform you, That I

am reduc'd to this Publication in my own defence. For, whilst I was far from dreaming of permitting this Epistle to pass out of my Closet, it happen'd, that a broken Copy of it did (by I know not what misfortune for me) fall into the hands of a necessitous person, who would needs perswade himself, that by Printing it, he might relieve some of his present wants; and thereupon proffer'd to sell the Copy for a Sum of Money. But, my good fortune leading him to a Stationer, to whom my name was not unknown, he very civilly sent me forthwith notice of the Proposition that was made him, and after came himself to acquaint me, that the Copy about which he had been Treated with, being but One of Two or Three that were then abroad, some or other of them would, questionless, soon find the way to the Press. This unwelcome Accident did little less trouble than surprize me; for, besides that it impos'd on me the necessity of a Publication I had so long declin'd; and besides that I knew, that Compositures of a very differing Nature being expected from me, the appearing of this, instead of Them, would make this unwelcome to many, though it had fewer Imperfections that it has: Besides these things (I say) my Sight was then, and is still, so impair'd by

Some Treatise relating to Experimental Philosophy.

a distemper in my Eyes; and the hours I could dispose of, were so Præingag'd to Philosophical Themes, that I could not promise my self so much as to read it over before its going to the Printer. But, considering after all this, that the Copy I had by me was like to prove more Full, and less Faulty, than any of those that some endeavour'd to obtrude upon the World. I thought it less inconvenient to venture mine own abroad, than to run the hazard of a surreptitious Edition of a Discourse, that could so ill bear the appearing with any other Blemishes than those it brought with it into the World from my Pen. And therefore having put it into the hands of Persons, whose eminent Abilities, the more knowing part of the Nation has long and justly admir'd, and begg'd their Impartial Opinion and Castigations of it, (giving them entire liberty to Alter or Expunge whatever they dislik'd;) and finding (by hastily turning over the Leaves) that their Castigations were only enough to let me see, that they had heedfully read it over; and were accompanied with encouragements, which care was taken to keep me from looking upon as meer Compliments: I let it go to the Press, without so much as having once perus'd it, or heard it read over since the Sta-

tioner first gave me the Advertisement I told you of. Which I made the less scruple to do, because a Critick, whose Judgment and Piety I much reverence, seriously endeavour'd to perswade me, that I ought not in Conscience to decline publishing what he was pleased to think proper to kindle or cherish the Flames of Divine Love in the Breasts of the Readers. And my Haste it self did afterwards Promise me these Advantages, That notwithstanding my Books not coming forth sooner, I should not lose the Excuse of Youth I had when it was Written: nay, and That the Faulty passages which may be met with in it, will perhaps be charged upon those that suffer'd them to pass Uncorrected, when they had so absolute a Power to Expunge or Reform them. These, and the like Motives, having induc'd me to consent to the Publication of the following Letter, I needed not deliberate long, To whom I should Address it. For, since that accomplish'd Lindamor, whom it so much concern'd, has left the World, there is no person in it to whom this Address is any thing near so due, as unto You, Dear Sister. It was at that Delicious Leeze, where you are now the Mistress, that this Letter was written; and it was of You that I borrow'd those Hours I spent in Writing

ting it. 'Twas to You that I shew'd it almost Sheet by Sheet, before I resolv'd to send it away. 'Tis You that can best Excuse the Imperfections of it, as knowing not only the more obvious, but the more private Avocations and other Disadvantages, among which it was Penn'd. 'Tis You that have ever since Solicited me to divulge it, and have given me the greatest Encouragements to do so, not only by those Solicitations which imply'd Your own Favourable Opinion of it, but by procuring me (by concealing or disguising my Name) the unsuspected Opinions of divers competent Judges: in a word, this Address belongs upon so many scores to You, that I could not make it any where else, without manifestly wronging You. I know, Dear Sister, that it is not usual to Dedicate Books to so near a Relation; and that it is usual in Dedicatory Epistles, both to Depreciate what one has Written to Extol the Person that one writes to, especially if it be one of your Sex and Quality. But, You know too, that I never swore Allegiance to Custom, and therefore will not, I suppose, wonder to see me as little Solicitous to conform to it on This occasion as on others. In an age when so few Persons have Merit enough, to keep that from being Flattery, which should be but

Praise,

Praise, I am not at all Ambitious of casting my self upon the unhappy necessity of either Flattering, or appearing Rude; when by better chusing the Objects of my Addresses, I can, as occasion requires, give Praises without untruth, or forbear them without Incivility. Nor dare I presume, that a Lye ceases to be a fault, by being put into a Dedicatory Epistle as anciently the hurtful Beasts forgot their pernicious Nature, when brought into the Ark. Not to mention that Books of Devotion have generally the strange and unhappy Fate, of being less welcome to them that most, than to them that less, need them. As for the Discourse I present You, though my Opinion of it may be guess'd at, by the Privacy to which I have so long Confin'd it: Yet because, as in Physick to have a good Opinion of the Medicine, and the Doctor; so in Books of Devotion, (which are a kind of Physick for the Mind) to have one of the Composure, or of the Writer, both inclines us to look after the Præscriptions, and Advantages their Operations; For this reason I shall say nothing to disparage a Discourse, which is of a Nature to aim more at the being practised by the Readers, than the being pardon'd; and shall not at all repine to see it stand from the Publick as Favoura-

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ble a Reception, as it has hitherto met with in Cloſets. And now, Dear Siſter, though I know you will not; yet I doubt, my other Readers will expect, that this Letter ſhould, according to the Mode of Epiſtles Dedicatory, *be concluded with Commendations of you, and Compliments to you: It being almoſt as much out of faſhion in, ſuch Addreſſes to omit giving praiſes, as 'tis to believe the praiſes given on ſuch occaſion. But, though I can praiſe you without either disbelieving my ſelf, or fearing to be disbelieved by any that knows you; yet, beſides that our Relation, and our Friendſhip would make ſuch a way of writing misbecoming me on all occaſions; I know your Piety and your Modeſty, would peculiarly diſallow it upon this; where the ſubject I am to entertain you with, is of ſuch a Nature, as would make a Flaunting Addreſs, but a very unſuitable Introduction to it. The Nature of my Theme, as well as the ſtrictneſs of your Virtue, and our Friendſhip, forbidding me here to celebrate you, otherwiſe than by letting the World ſee, that I dare, even in a Dedicatory Addreſs, without fear of diſpleaſing you, forbear to celebrate you. And if it be demanded, why then I refrain not likewiſe from writing to You a Dedication? I ſhall anſwer, that I*

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am unwilling to lose this opportunity of making a publick acknowledgment, that as I have the honour to be your Brother, and your Friend, so I have the Justice to think it very much my Happiness to be so: Especially, since you are pleased to assure me, That my Relation to you has rather been the occasion than the ground of a Friendship, that does, whilst it enjoins me to profess my self without Complement, Oblige me to be, with all the Sincerity that's possible,

My Dear Sister,

Your most Affectionate Brother,

and most Faithful

Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

Advertiſements to the Reader.

(As they were written ſome Years ſince, when ſome Intelligent Perſons were to have a ſight of the following *Diſcourſe.*)

TO prevent thoſe Scruples which elſe might ariſe in the peruſal of the enſuing Diſcourſe, the Reader of it is requeſted to take notice,

I. *That though Ignorance hath been of late ſo much in faſhion with too many of our Young Nobility, that ſome Paſſages of the enſuing Papers may ſeem unfit to have been written to a Young Gentleman, yet the Perſon they were addreſſed to, being both a Traveller, a Linguiſt, and a Scholar, it was not improper to diſcourſe with him at the rate of ſuppoſing him ſo qualify'd.*

II. *That the enſuing Letter was not written ſingle, being but the Laſt of Divers;* wherein *Love in general was Confeſſed, Juſtify'd, and Celebrated;* wherein *the received way of Making Love was Explicated,*

Defen-

Defended, and Opposed; wherein *Constancy and Inconstancy in Love were argued For and Against*; wherein *Platonick Love was Explicated, Celebrated, and* wherein *the Cure of Love was proposed, and Prosecuted*; wherein (*to dispatch*) *the Controverted Points concerning Love were discours'd of, in a way suited to several Themes*; *and to the Humors and Principles of the supposed Writers. But all the former Papers, (written in Complement to a fair Lady) though very free from the Guilt of either Licentiousness, or Prophaneness, have been by the Author judged too little Serious, either to appear Alone, or to accompany the ensuing Discourse, wherein he has expressed his Own Opinions, as in the former he but deduced of those Imaginary Persons.*

III. *That the following Paper was to have been Attended by another, wherein the Properties and Duties of Seraphick Love were to have been Explicated and insisted on, but the* Author, *before he had Written that Other, accidentally meeting with a* French *Book, wherein though what he had already Discoursed of were not handled, he found that much of what he had designed to set down was anticipated; and the most Pertinent*

L'Amour Divin. de Mr. du Moulin.

nent Conſiderations his intended Themes ſuggeſted, were skilfully diſplayed already: he fear'd it might be injurious to his Reader, and himſelf, if he ſhould either turn a tranſcriber of others Notions, or decline the beſt thoughts belonging to his Theme, *that the Leſs Good ones might paſs without ſuſpicion for his Own.*

IV. *That the enſuing Triſle having been written in haſte, and by ſnatches, amongſt diſtracting avocations, and far from Lettered ry accommodations, is freely ſubmitted to the Cenſure of Learned and Impartial Peruſers, eſpecially Divines: Who are by the Author requeſted to believe its miſtaking Paſſages, and unwary Expreſſions, (if it contain any ſuch) to have been altogether* Unintentional, *and ſuch as they ſhall never find it to be more than one labour to make him diſcern and retract; he being reſolved, by God's aſſiſtance, to continue ſtill obſequious enough to all clearer diſcoveries of Truth, to be able to ſay,* Errare poſſum, Hæreticus eſſe Nolo. *And, as he is on his part ſo reſigned, and ſo willing to be rectify'd, ſo he expects this Equity from thoſe, to whoſe Judgments he ſubmits, that conſidering he intended not to write a ſolemn and regular Treatiſe, but a private and familiar Epiſtle, they will*

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pass by such unaccurateneſſes as are wont to be incident to compoſers of this later Nature. He preſum'd he might ſometimes make bold with the vulgar Laws of Tenſes, treating of an Eternity that admits them not. He hop'd that the freedom taken in ſome of his Expreſſions concerning Love, *and the wonted objects of it, would be excus'd, by its being exacted by the Deſign he had upon* Lindamor, *though he had not (which yet he has) otherwiſe accounted for it. He intends not to adopt thoſe often erroneous) Traditions of the Vulgar, whence he ſometimes draws Compariſons, that he may not deny himſelf the Liberty taken by the Generality of Writers (without excepting the Learneder ſort of them) who ſcruple not in Popular Compoſures, to make Similies and Alluſions grounded on Popular Traditions and Perſwaſions. As for thoſe common Places, which the Method of our Author's Diſcourſe allowed him not to decline, he hopes the Reader will diſcern by his way of Writing, that he loves to uſe them, not as Travellers, but as Hunters uſe* the High-ways: *For the Traveller, when he once gets into the Road, makes it his buſineſs to keep in it; whereas the Hunter, if he meets one lying in his way, is not fond of Staying in it,*

In a Dedication of all the foremention'd Letters to my Lady T. J.

it, but nimbly. Croſſes it, or Traverſes ſo much of it, as is requiſite to be paſt through in the purſuit of his Game. And laſtly, if in ſome few Paſſages of the following Letter (eſpecially about the beginning of it) the Expreſſions are leſs Grave and Solemn than the Deſign; the Author hopes, that even they will yet appear tolerably Serious, for the Airieſt parts of a Letter, written by one Young Gentleman to another.

SOME MOTIVES To the Love of GOD.

My Dearest Lindamor,

I Am very much delighted to learn both by the Voice of Fame, and the Information of much more credible Relators, that *Hermione*'s cold usage has cur'd you of the Fever her scorching Eyes had given you: And that when once you found you self reserved, to shew, what wonders her Eyes were able to perform, you seasonably resolv'd to become an Instance of the Power, rather of Reason, than of Love; and accordingly, did your self the right to frustrate the vain hopes, your insulting Mistriss cherish'd, to manifest in you,

that her Charms were capable to make your Flame perſevere, when her change had made it as well cauſeleſs as hopeleſs. I could wiſh indeed for your ſake, that you owed your Cure more entirely to your Reaſon, and leſs to your Reſentment; that the extraction of your freedom may no ways blemiſh it. But, ſince unallay'd Satisfactions are joys too Heavenly to fall to many Mens ſhares on Earth, I cannot but conclude, that your Recovery, even on theſe Terms, deſerves I ſhould congratulate it. For, the *French* ſay truly, that *Les plus courtes Folies ſont les meilleures.* And Liberty being too high a Bleſſing to be diveſtible of that nature by Circumſtances; I (that ſeldom deplore him, who, by loſing his Miſtriſs, recovers himſelf) think that *Hermione* has but intentionally, not eventually diſoblig'd you; and hath made your flames a better return, by reſtoring you your own Heart, than ſhe could have done by exchanging hers for it. But that which not leaſt endears to me your Recovery, is, that I am aſſur'd by Perſons, from whom I dare credit even ſo welcome News, that my endeavours prov'd ſo happy, as to be conducive to it, and that

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the Conſiderations I ventur'd to preſent you, and at leaſt ſo far contribute to your freedom, as to give you the deſire and the deſign of regaining it. For, I hope, I need not tell you, that I ſeldom uſe Endeavours, whoſe proſperouſneſs is more welcome to me, than thoſe that aſpire to ſerve *Lindamor*. And though I cannot ever pay you any great Services in relation to my vaſtly greater deſires, yet I can ſcarce do you little ones in relation to the delight reſulting from the having done you any. Nor has the joy which this ſucceſs of my diſcourſes brings me, being ſparingly encreas'd by my having ventur'd them with much more deſire, than expectation of their Proſpering; and leſs out of any ſtrong hope they would ſucceed, than out out an unwillingneſs to leave the means, I thought leaſt improbable unaſſay'd: Being invited to excite you to greater hopes, than I durſt allow my ſelf for you, by the example of Generals, who, whatſoever diſtruſtfull thoughts they harbor in their Breaſts, ſuppoſe, that (before the Battel) to make their Soldiers Fight ſucceſsfully, 'tis as well conducive as requiſite, by encouraging Orations, to make them think they

ſhall do ſo. For, although I endeavour'd indeed to perſwade you, that Reaſon being born Sovereign of the Paſſions, though her Lenity or Supineneſs do ſometimes both occaſion and permit their Uſurpations; ſhe is ſeldom ſo diveſted of her Native Power, but that whenſoever ſhe pleaſeth to imploy what ſhe hath left, ſhe is able to reſume what ſhe hath loſt: And though I was willing you ſhould believe, that to perfect what your Reſentment had begun, was a Task ſo eaſie, that the Victory was as much in your Power as the reſolution of attempting it; yet, notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, I was once half perſwaded, that to undertake the Curing of a Lover, was the next Weakneſs to the being one. And, *Lindamor*, to deal ingeniouſly with you, your Recovery hath circumſtances in it, that make me very apprehenſive that you are not yet out of the danger of a Relapſe, and that you have not half ſo abſolutely abandon'd your former Amorous Conſtitution of Mind, as the former Idol of it. I know that from a Perſon, who, for one that hath never yet been hurt by *Cupid*, is accuſed of uſing him ſlightingly, and ſeverely enough, you will expect Endeavours

deavours to preſerve you from Relapſes, by ſuch diſſuaſions from Love, as its Votaries will ſcarce vouchſafe ſo mild a Title to, as that of Invectives againſt it. And I ſhall Ingeniouſly acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that I have been ſometimes no very unready Satyriſt on that Theme; and with a Pen reliſhing of the Liberty I cheriſh'd in my Heart, endeavour'd to diſabuſe thoſe ſervile Souls, thar being born to Reaſon, ſo far degraded themſelves as to boaſt ſolely an exceſs of Paſſion; and had ſuch low and narrow Thoughts of Felicity and Miſery, as to expect either from a Womans uſage. All which I thought I might the freelier do, becauſe having never known the Infelicities of Love, but in the ſufferings of others, I Might probably ſuppoſe, that my Declamations againſt it would paſs for the productions of my Reaſon, not my Revenge. But, *Lindamor*, though the extravagancies of ſome Mens folly, have been ſometimes too great, ro ſet me avoid laughing ſomewhat Satyrically at it, yet I am really too little an Enemy to Love, unleſs exceſſive or miſ-placed, by indiſtinct and disfiguring Conſiderations, to repreſent to you the Nobleſt Paſſion of the Mind, as its

moſt hideous and formidable Diſeaſe.

Sect. 1. To love even with ſome paſſionateneſs, the Perſon you would Marry, is not only allowable, but expedient, being almoſt neceſſary to the Duty of fixing your affection, where you have once engaged your Faith; for, it hath been obſerv'd, that love doth ſeldom ſuffer it ſelf to be confin'd by other Matches, than thoſe of its own making. And few, but they, that are ſo wiſe as they ſee cauſe to be almoſt in Love before-hand with thoſe they Marry, prove ſo honeſt, as afterwards to be in Love with none elſe. Since therefore, the Marriage of a wiſe Man ſuppoſes at leaſt as high a degree of Love, as he is capable to cheriſh, without forfeiting that Title; I can ſcarce diſallow the being moderately in Love, without being injurious to Marriage, which is a Relation, that though I can with much leſs reluctancy permit others, than contract my ſelf; yet dare I not abſolutely condemn a condition of Life, as expedient to no man, without which, even Paradiſe and Innocence were not ſufficient to compleat the happineſs of the firſt Man. Thus you ſee, *Lindamor*, that I do not promiſcuouſly Quarrel with all ſorts of Love,

but

but endeavour only to poſſeſs you with this Truth, that as anciently among the *Jews*, there were odoriferous Unguents, which it was neither unuſual nor unlawful to anoint themſelves with, or beſtow upon their Friends; but there was a certain peculiar compoſition too, of a precious Oyntment, which God having reſerved to be imploy'd in his own Service; with that, the perfuming of their Friends was Criminal and Sacrilegious: So there are regulated degrees of Love, which 'tis not forbidden to harbour for a Friend, a Miſtriſs, or a Wife; but there is too a certian peculiar ſtrain, or (if I may ſo call it) Heroick Temperament of Love, which, where-ever it is found, makes it belong, as unalienable, as juſtly unto God. A virtuous Wife may love both her Husband's Relations and her own, and yet be truly ſaid to love him with her whole Heart; becauſe there is a certain unrivall'd degree of kindneſs; and a peculiar ſort of Love, which conſtitutes true conjugal affection, that ſhe confines to him, and reſerves intirely for him, and would think it Criminal to harbour for any other Perſon: So a Religious Soul may obey the Command of Loving God

God entirely, though ſhe allow her Affections other Objects; provided they be kept in due Subordination to, and kept from entring into Competition with that Love, which ought to be appropriated to Him; and which reſults chiefly from, an either altogether or almoſt unincreaſable Elevation, and vaſtneſs of Affection; from an entire Reſignment to, and an abſolute Dependance on the Lov'd Party; from a reſtleſs Diſquiet upon the leaſt ſenſe or doubt of her diſpleaſure; from a greater Concern in her Intereſts than ones own; from an Expectation no leſs than Felicity or Wretchedneſs from her Friendſhip or Indignation; or at leaſt a Perſuadedneſs that nothing can be a greater Happineſs than her Favour, or deſerve the name of Happineſs without it. For, where-ever a Paſſion has theſe Properties, or any of them, conſpicuous in it; it cannot, but by being Conſecrated to God, avoid becoming injurious both to Him and to it ſelf. The very Nobleneſs of it entitles Him to it: As in ſome Kingdoms, (and particularly here in *England*) though Veins of courſer Metals may belong to the Owner of the Soil they grow in, yet all the Mines of the more perfect Metals

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(as Gold and Silver) are by the Law made Mines Royal, and belong to the King, to whom their value appropriates them, By reflecting upon this peculiar Notion of Love, you may be pleas'd, *Lindamor*, to interpret ſuch Indefinite Expreſſions as you may meet wth in the following Diſcourſe. And this Love, I have taken the freedom to ſtyle *Seraphick Love*, (not out of any affectation of Tumid Words or Titles, but) borrowing the name from (if the Romiſh Divines be good Marſhals of the Heavenly Hoſt) thoſe Nobler Spirits of the Cœleſtial Hierarchy, whoſe Name in the Language to which it belongs, expreſſes them to be of a flaming nature; and whoſe Imployment (mentioned in the * Evangelical Prophet's Myſterious Viſion) ſufficiently points at the Divine Object, to which the flames that warm them, aſpire and tend. And methinks, *Lindamor*, that you ſhould find it no faint Invitation to embrace *Seraphick Love*, that you may have the Advantage, by making your ſelf a Rival to theſe glorious Spirits;

Iſa. 6. 2, 3.

* The Name *Seraphim*, in Hebrew, ſprings from the Root *Saraph*, which ſignifies to burn or flame: Whence, *Numb* 21. 6. thoſe pernicious Creatures, that our Tranſlators Engliſh, *Fiery Serpents*, are ſtyled in the Original *Hammechaſim has ſeraphim.*

Spirits; to make them your Friends, and the Honor to be ingaged in a Service, where you are ſure of ſuch illuſtrious Concurrents. At leaſt if you be of the mind of that generous Youth, (to whoſe ſucceſsful Valour the conquer'd World was both Theatre and Trophy) who refus'd to run at the Olympick Games, becauſe there were no Monarchs to run with him. But I fear, *Lindamor*, I have a little digreſs'd; ſince I might have told you in fewer Words, That it is not my deſign, in this Paper, to declaim againſt Love in general, or make a ſolemn Harangue of the Fickleneſs of Women; and that therefore, as when young Gallants (ſuch as you, *Lindamor*) are ſubject to caſt away their Love upon unfit Objects, their diſcreet Friend, (ſenſible of the truth of the *Italian* Comick's obſervation, that

Oneſtá contra' amore
E treppo fraile ſchermo
In giovinetto cuore.

In youthful Hearts bare Virtues
wont to prove
But a weak Shield againſt the
darts of Love.)

without

without taking any more than neceſſary notice of their former fond and ſtraggling Paſſions, reclaim them, by either matching them, or at leaſt (in order thereunto) engaging their Addreſſes to Perſons, whoſe Beauty or Prerogatives may both legitimate and confine their Affections: So I ſhall endeavour to prevent the future Gaddings of your Love to Objects, that cannot deſerve ſo tranſcendent and diſintereſt a one, as I have obſerv'd yours to have been; by preferring and engaging it to the True Object that Paſſion was born to, the Nobleſt it can aſpire to, and the moſt Satisfying it can enjoy. Yes, *Lindamor*, as it has hitherto been my not-unproſperous Task to Unhood your Soul, I ſhall now make it my buſineſs to ſhew her Game to fly at. I ſee that Love in *Lindamor* is too noble and Predominant an Affection, to be either Eaſie or Fit to be deſtroy'd. It will therefore be my deſign, not to Suppreſs your flame, but to Addreſs it. I wiſh'd it withdrawn from *Hermione*, not to annihilate it, but to Transfigure it; I would not have a Paſſion which wanted nothing but a due Object, to be *Seraphick Love*, like vulgar Men, be ſwallow'd up by Death, the common Fate;

Fate: But be enobled by a Deſtiny like that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who, having ceas'd to converſe with Mortals, Dy'd not, but were Tranſlated into Heaven.

Sect. 2. What has been ſaid already, *Lindamor*, hath, it ſeems, ſuffic'd to rectifie your Love, by Diſabuſing it, and ſhewing you how unfitly it was plac'd on its former Objects. Your proficiency in That, invites me to proceed with you to a new Leſſon, and (mindful of that true Saying of an Eniment Father, *Nemo aliquem amat, quem non vult eſſe meliorem*) to endeavour to exalt your paſſion by Directing and Settling it upon an Object, the due Contemplation of whoſe Lovelineſs may cure as perfectly all hurts received from any Mortal Beauty, as anciently the Sight of the Myſterious Serpent on the Pole did cure the hurts the fiery Serpents gave. For, ſince to gaze ſtedfaſtly on an outward Beauty, where all your looking will but diſcover the ſame face, is found ſo effectual to Kindle or to Blow the fire of Love, (which the *Greeks* prettily enough expreſs by their ἐκ τῆ ὀρᾶν γίνιτα τὸ ἐρᾶν) how much muſt a due Contemplation enamour us of that Divine, and, though Refulgent, yet ever more and more Diſcoverable

Numb. ca. 21. v. 8, 9.

coverable Object, where Attention and Wonder ſtill mutually excite and cheriſh each other? Whence the zealouſeſt and perfecteſt Lovers of God are the glorious Angels, of whom our Saviour ſays, That in Heaven, *they always behold the face of his Father which is in Heaven*; and thoſe bleſſed Saints, whoſe imployment, and whoſe happineſs is, in the *Revelation*, expreſt to be, *To follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes.* And thoſe unblemiſh'd Perſons are in that place recorded to have kept themſelves Undefiled by mortal Beauties; to teach us, that the nearrer and clearer Intuition, that Heaven affords them of the glorious Object of their Paſſion, was not the Cauſe of it, but the Recompence; and that whilſt they Liv'd Exiles here on Earth, 'twas ſuch a ſpeculation, as I am recommending (*Lindamor*) to You, wherewith they liv'd (to borrow the Expreſſion uſed of *Moſes*) *as ſeeing him who is invisible*; a Sight, whoſe Glory made them look on fading Beauties, with as undazel'd and untroubl'd Eyes, as Eagles can be ſuppos'd to caſt on Glow-worms when they have been newly gazing on the Sun.

Matt. 18. 20.

Rev. 14. 4.

Heb. 11. 27.

To engage your Love. *Lindamor*, to *Sect.* 3.

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this ſublimeſt of objects, I ſhall deſire, that all that I have ſaid to divert your former flames, and all that may ſay to depreciate and diſcredit thoſe degrading and diſquieting Amours, that are wont to inveagle Mortals, may be lookt upon as meant, rather by way of Preparative, than of Motive, aiming but to diſabuſe and rectifie your Mind, that with compos'd and unprepoſſeſs'd thoughts, you may judge of the Object I propoſe to you. Which, to qualifie you to be but impartial to, this method ſeem'd expedient; being but imploy'd upon ſuch a ſcore, as that on which the Platoniſts uſe to premiſe certain virtues, which they (ſignificantly enough) call'd Purgative, to diſpoſe and fit the mind for the reception of ſublimer Truths. As Phyſicians to clear the ſight are wont to purge the Head, that the Eye freed from all darkning and diſguiſing Tinctures, may the more perfectly diſcern the objects preſented to it. And certainly, the Love I would perſuade is of a nature, that makes nothing more conducive to it than the greateſt uncloudedneſs of the Eye, and the perfecteſt illuſtration of the Object: which is ſuch, that the cleareſt reaſon is the moſt advantageous

Light

Light it can deſire to be ſeen by. You know the ſtory of that witty Wench, who us'd merrily to wiſh her Lover all good Qualities but a good Underſtanding; for That, ſaid ſhe, would make them out of Love with me. The Divine Object, to which I would Prefer you, *Lindamor*, is ſo far from being obnoxious to a Danger of that Nature, that I need not Diſparage any other to Enamour you of this. For, the Creator is too full of Excellencies to need to be recommended or ſet off by the Creature's Defects. He was Soveraignly Lovely in Himſelf, before they had a Being; nor has his giving us that Paſſion call'd Love, made him the unfitter Object for it. To love God, but becauſe your Miſtriſs has perſonal faults, is a greater, than any of thoſe for which you have declin'd her; and is ſuch a Soloeciſm in *Seraphick Love*, as it were in the Perſian Religion, (for that has yet embracers in the Eaſt, as thoſe, that have there convers'd with them, aſſure me) to make the Spots that blemiſh the Moon their Motives of their worſhipping the Sun. *Hermione* is a Lady, to whoſe noble Relations I am too much a Servant, not to have a Reſpect for Her; and I cannot,

without concluding her an Extraordinary perſon, remember how lately ſhe enjoy'd the honour of Captivating *Lindamor*; and though ſhe has ſince, by injuriouſly Declining, juſtly forfeited the glorious Title of his Miſtriſs; yet the Qualities, that gave it her, made me, among divers others, like her ſo well, that 'tis now my Quarrel to her, that ſhe is not what ſhe Was. And therefore whatever may fall from my Pen to her diſadvantage, relates to Her but as ſhe was, or may again be, an Obſtacle to your devotedneſs to *Seraphick Love*. To ingage you to which, (all this notwithſtanding, *Lindamor*) I muſt do you the right to tell you, that God deſerves the higheſt Elevation of your Love, though *Hermione* had not rejected it. Were ſhe not only as Handſome as you fancy'd her, but as Conſtant as you wiſhed her, her Beauty and her Friendſhip too concurring, could not have made her other than as Diſadvantageous as Injurious, a Rival unto God; and, in the very Fruition of as obliging Returns as her Kindneſs could have made your Paſſion, ſhe would have deſerv'd but a more moderate Degree of it. Angels, to whom Women were never falſe, or cru-

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el, love their Maker above all things: and he to whom St. *John* preſents his Adoration, refuſed it for himſelf to direct it unto God. Would not your ſelf, *Lindamor*, have thought your *Hermione* abſolutely handſome, though Moors had not worn the Devils Livery; and the thing call'd deformity, had been as much a ſtranger, as it is unwelcome to her Sex? 'tis true, ſuch is our frailty, that, As the *Iſraelites* needed a cruel and oppreſſive Bondage in *Egypt*, to make them reſolve on returning to the Bleſſed Land of *Canaan*; ſo oftentimes, the amorous Soul needs the harſh uſage of a diſdainful Miſtriſs, to diſguſt it with its Thraldom, and make it aſpire to its more genuine and ſatisfying object. I may therefore allow *Hermione*'s defects to have given you freedom and occaſion to conſider the Prerogatives of *Seraphick Love*: but I muſt not allow them to be the chief Motives of your embracing it. For, it were too injurious to its glorious object, to make that but the refuge of a defeated Paſſion, whoſe tranſcendency Entitles it to more than the moſt elevated and entire one. Alas, God needs not theſe beggerly Parallels with any fading Objects, to be-

Rev. 22. 1. & 19. 1.

come that of our diſabus'd Devotion, and he were lovely without Compariſon, as well as he is ſo far above it. And though I be not ſo unjuſt to deny, that there are Ladies (ſome of which I have the Happineſs not to be unknown to my ſelf) whoſe Excellencies are capable to ennoble their whole Sex: Yet their greateſt Accompliſhments, compar'd to his Perfections, whoſe Gifts they are, are in that Eclipſing company, as inconſpicuous as the faint Qualities of more ordinary perſons. As when in a clear Morning, the Riſing-Sun vouchſafes to viſit us, as well thoſe bright Stars that did adorn our Hemiſphere, as thoſe dark ſhades that did benight it, vaniſh: Conſonantly whereunto, give me leave to obſerve to you, *Lindamor*, that though divers of God's Attributes, are, through his goodneſs, participated by his Creatures, yet the Scripture makes ſo vaſt a deſparity betwixt the Excellencies that it aſcribes to Men, and the ſame perfections conſider'd as they exiſt in God, that it ſeems abſolutely to exclude Created Beings from any Title to thoſe Attributes; becauſe they poſſeſs them but in a way ſo inferior to that tranſcendent, peculiar, and Divine manner

manner, in which they belong to God. Thus our Saviour ſays to him that (taking him but for a Man) call'd him good, *Why calleſt thou me good? there is none good but one,* (that is,) *God*, Mat. 19. 16. 19. Thus St. *Paul* calls God (or Chriſt) the only potentate Μόνος δυνάστης, 2 Tim. 6. 15. though the Earth be ſhared by ſeveral Potentates; and even the devout *Eunuch* in the *Acts*, and the depoſed Grandees mentioned by the Bleſſed Virgin in her Canticle, are in the Original, ſtyled Potentates. Thus, though there be wiſe Virgins as well as fooliſh; Acts 8 17. Luk. 1.52. and though our Saviour tells us, That *the Children of this World, are, in their Generations, wiſer than the Children of Light*: Yet St. *Paul* ſcruples not to term his Maker, Mat. 25.5. Luk. 16.8. *the only wiſe God*; and thus he elſewhere Paraphraſes him, *He that hath only immortality*, though Angels and humane Souls be Deathleſs. In ſo incommunicable a manner does the Superiority of God's Nature make him poſſeſs thoſe very Excellencies, which the Diffuſiveneſs of his Goodneſs, makes him pleaſed to Communicate. I am the more zealous, *Lindamor*, to transfigure your Love into Devotion, (which I muſt deſire you to look upon but as a vary'd name for 1 Tim. 1. 17. 1 Tim. 5 18.

Seraphick Love) becauſe I have obſerved your Paſſion to have been extremely impatient of Confinement, and to have eſteem'd whatever may be term'd limits to be Priſons. Few therefore can need more, or deſerve better, an Object for their Love, for which too immenſe a vaſtneſs were impoſſible. And ſuch a one is God, whoſe Soveraign perfections render him ſo uncapable of being lov'd too much, that the moſt aſpiring Paſſion can ſcarce arrive (ſo much, as) to leſſen its diſproportion to the Object. Other Paſſions, like other Rivers, are moſt lik'd when they calmly flow within their wonted Banks: but of *Seraphick Love*, as of *Nilus* the very Inundations might be deſirable, and his overflowings make him the more welcome. For mortal Beauties, our Paſſions are like our ſelves: If our Stature chance to exceed a certain ſize or Standard, it makes us monſtrous; but Devotion is like a flawleſs Diamond, where the bigneſs Taxes the value, and the unuſual bulk both rates and inhances the Luſtre and the Price. To give God all our love is the greateſt Command both of the Law and Goſpel (in its capacious and teeming Womb, both

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Comprising and Cherishing all the other Services God requires) and that there is not more exacted of us, is not, that an Addition were Culpable, but because it is Impossible. So noble is the Nature of Devotion, that it admits of failings, but by one of the Extreams, which is that of Defect. For, Mediocrity, (whose Office 'tis to restrain us from approaching the utmost Limits) which in other Passions is an Excellence, is here an Imperfection. Or at least, if Mediocrity be that which creates Passions, Virtues, the Mediocrity of this Love must consist in the Boundlessness of it, since that is it which makes it most a Virtue. The Man after God's own heart, is not afraid to own even to his Maker, an Ardency of Love for Him, which must be exprest by the significant Metaphor of Thirst; and that such a Thirst too, as makes the panting Hart (by Naturalists observed to be a very Dry Creature) *bray* (as I remember the Hebrew hath it) for those refreshing streams, whose want distresses and reduces her to an almost gasping Condition: *My very Soul* (saith he) *thirsteth for God.* And we know, that Thirst is not only so violent an Appetite, that it

Psal. 42. 1. *Cervina caro sicca est*, &c. Sennert. *Insti. De Alimentor. facultatibus*, lib. 4. part. 1. cap. 3. Verse 2.

leſſens the Wonder of that Monarch's Bargain, whom Hiſtory records to have parted with his Kingdom for a Cup of Water: But thirſt doth ſo confine our Longings to what it craves, that nothing elſe can ſatisfie them. The wealth of both the *Indies* would not excuſe the want of a needed Cup, ſuppoſe their Poſſeſſor tormented with an Appetite, which cannot be quench'd but by Drink. To which I muſt add, that the uneaſineſs of unrelieved Thirſt, is not, like that of other inconveniencies, leſſen'd by Continuance, but grows by Laſting, the more Unſupportable. The ſame inſpir'd Poet ſcruples not alſo to profeſs ſo ſenſible and ſo Active a Concern for God's Intereſts, that the *zeal of God's House hath eaten him up*; and hugely troubled he is, that others are not affected with the ſame Zeal. *I beheld* (ſays he) *the Tranſgreſſors, and was grieved becauſe they kept not thy Word.* Nay, *Rivers of Waters*, ſays he, *run down mine Eyes, becauſe they kept not thy Law*; and, to manifeſt how much the tenderneſs and unreſerv'dneſs of his Love, made him think thoſe his Friends or Enemies, that were ſo to God, *Mine eyes* (ſays he) *ſhall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me*;

Pſal. 119. 153. Eodem, v. 136.

Pſal. 101. 6.

me: He that walketh perfect in the way, he shall serve me. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies. Pſal. 139. 21, 22.

At this Rate did pious *David* love his Maker; but he was ſo far from thinking this Rate Exceſſive, that tranſported by the Senſe of his Perſonal Diſability, to pay that Divine Object all the Love that his Perfections merited; he is not content to rouſe up all his own Faculties to Praiſe God, (*Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bleſs his Holy Name*) but he invites all the Godly to aſſiſt him in the Payment of ſo vaſt a Debt. (*Love the Lord all ye Saints*, for *&c.*) And again, (*Praiſe the Lord, all ye Nations, praiſe him all ye People.*) And not content neither frequently to do this, as may appear by very many Paſſages of his Sacred Poems, he extends his Invitation to the Angels, and all the other Hoſts of God, and concludes the Book of Pſalms, with a, *Let every thing that hath breath praiſe the Lord.* Hallelujah. Pſal. 103. 1. Pſal. 117. 1. Pſal. 138. 2.

Nor does it invalidate what has now been delivered, that ſome Men have, even by Devout Perſons, been blam'd *Sect.* 4.

for

for too much Devotion: for it was not an excess of Love; but a want of Discretion, that was guilty of their Faults: The Expressions of our Love to God ought to be regulated, not by our blind and wild Phancies, but by his revealed Will, (as *Christ* says, *If you love me, keep my Commandments*) and therefore it is very possible to be too devout, not because any Expression of *Seraphick Love* can be made with too much Ardency, whilst 'tis consider'd abstractedly in it self, and irrelatively to the rest; But because that there being several Duties of Love, which require an Ardency of it, 'tis injurious to exercise all that in one alone, or a few, that belongs equally to the neglected others. We must not (as too many Professors are now wont to do, of whose Error you may receive a fuller account in some other Papers) dash in pieces the two Tables of the Law against one another; But must so *love God with all our hearts, as to love our Neighbour as our selves.* You know what our Saviour saith to the Pharisees, that Tithed Mint, and Cummin, with a neglect of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, those weightier matters of the Law; *These ought you* (ἔδει) *to have done,*

Matth. 23. 23.

done, and not to leave the other undone. And, indeed, this Partiality, *Lindamor*, which makes us diſplay ſo much of the ſtrength and vigor of our Spirits in ſome Favourite-Duties, that we can but languidly and perfunctorily perform thoſe others we are leſs fond of, begets in Devotion a Diſeaſe, not unlike that new one in Children we call the *Rickets*, which ſome Learned Phyſicians do not improbably conceive to ariſe from the unequal Nutrition of the parts. For, though none of them receive exceſſive Nouriſhment; yet ſome of them receiving as much as is convenient for them, and thereby growing up to their natural bigneſs, whilſt others are leſs nouriſh'd than (were the body healthful) they would be, do grow ſo little, that the ſounder parts ſeem overgrown, and ſo the diſproportion betwixt them and the Ricketing ones, makes the whole Body they Compoſe mishappen and unweildly. But, *Lindamor*, this proves not that we can love God too much, but only that we may imploy too much of that Love, in this or that way of Expreſſing it. Whilſt we are (as *Job* ſpeaks) *Inhabitants of theſe houſes of clay*, there are many Duties, which Job. 4. 19.

which do as well Challenge an intenſity of our Affections, as thoſe which relate more immediately to God. As St. *Paul* tells us, that there is difference betwixt Married and Single perſons, the Affections of the one being at Liberty to devote themſelves more undiſtractedly to God, whereas thoſe of the other are diſtracted; (as *Adam*'s were, betwixt his Maker and his Rib.) But, where a direct and immediate Expreſſion of love to God defrauds not any other Duty, there it is free from the danger of Exceſs. Though Prayers may eaſily be too long, and Faſts grow exorbitant; yet Chriſt could ſpend the whole Night in Prayer, and Faſt forty days, without immoderateneſs, when the other Expreſſions of his Love to his Father, and the other Exerciſes of his Mediatory Function, were not thereby diſturb'd, but further'd and promoted. And ſo *Elijah* might inculpably faſt long, when that faſting did not diſable him to proſecute his Journey to the Mount of God; and though juſt men here on Earth muſt expreſs their Love to their Maſter by (that buſie diſtracting, and remoter way of Service) tradeing with his Talent truſted to them; yet

1 Cor. 7. 32, 33, 34.

1 King. 19. 2.

yet when their diveſture of Morality diſpenſes them from thoſe laborious and avocating Duties to diſtreſſed Chriſtians, and their own ſecular Relations, which are here requiſite to be perform'd; their glorify'd Spirits may now, without any immoderate Devotion, imploy, I ſay not, their time, but their Eternity it ſelf in converſing with God, and following the Lamb whitherſoever he goes. And congruouſly I obſerve, that the four Myſterious Beaſts, allow'd to approach neareſt to the Throne of God, though their many wings, and more numerous eyes, intimate them of a very active Nature, are repreſented to us in the Apocalypſe, as addicted but to one Imployment, ceaſing *neither day nor night from ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*; and from *giving Glory, and Honour, and Thanks unto him.* And of *thoſe that have whited their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb*, this Account is in the ſame Book given us, *that they are before the Throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his Temple.* So true is it, that no degree of *Seraphick Love* can be Exceſſive, nay, not any Expreſſion of it immoderate, unleſs it be made ſo, not by its greatneſs, but by its uſurpation,

Rev. 4. 6, 7.

Ver. 8.

Rev. 7. 14, 15.

pation, whereby it either ingroſſes or invades what belongs to its injur'd and languiſhing Aſſociates. Our Love unto the Creatures is a Preſent, but unto God it is a Tribute, and though we may eaſily play the Prodigal in parting (over-freely) with our Gifts, we can ſcarce be ſo in the Payment of our Debts; for, be the Sums never ſo vaſt we pay away, their being due, in ſpite of their being great, makes the Diſburſment too much an Act of Juſtice, to be one of Profuſeneſs. *Seraphick Love*, (whoſe Paſſionateneſs is its beſt Complexion) has then moſt approach'd its nobleſt meaſure, when it can leaſt be meaſur'd; nor ought its extent to admit any other limits, than an utter diſability to exceed thoſe that terminate it. For he alone loves God as much as he ought, that loving him as much as he can, ſtrives to repair the deplored imperfection of that Love with an extreme regret to find his Love no greater. Such a Sublimity of Love will beſt Entitle you the Conſolation accruing from that memorable Paſſage of St. *John*, where he ſays, *that God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, hath God in him*, which ſupplies me with a

1 Joh. 4. 16.

forcible

forcible Inducement, to invite you to an eager aſpiring to a Tranſcendency in Devotion, ſince it may render Self-denial ſo eaſie, that 'twill (at laſt) almoſt diveſt that Name. For, this ſublimer Love being, by an intimate Conjunction with its Object, wholly devoted to it, and throughly refined from all baſe droſs of Selfiſhneſs and intereſt, nobly begets a moſt ſtrict Union of our Wills with God's (or rather) a perfect Submiſſion of the one to the other. And thus, when it is become your Will to obey His, no Diſpenſations of Providence will immoderately diſquiet you; for you poſſeſs your Wiſhes in General, and in Bulk, though poſſibly not always in Retail. For, your chiefeſt Deſire being to ſee your Maker's Will fulfill'd, your knowledge of his being the Sovereign and uncontroll'd Diſpoſer of the Events aſſures you, that all Accidents that can befall you, are but exact Accompliſhments of his Will, and conſequently of Yours, ſo far forth as that is included and compriz'd in his. When you have Reſign'd, or rather Conſign'd your expropriated Will (if I may ſo call it) to God, and thereby (as it were) entruſted him to Will for you;

all

all his Diſpoſals of, and his Diſpenſations towards you, are, in effect, the Acts of your own Will, with the advantage of their being directed and Specified by Him. An advantage that does at once aſſure you both of their Rectitude and Succeſs. God's Wiſdom, Power, and Love to you conſider'd, how much more happy muſt you be in your Options of his chuſing for you, than your immediate own? The Patient thinks himſelf obliged to gratifie his Phyſician for chuſing for him what ſorts of Meat he is to feed on; though the Doctor be wont to make ſuch a choice for him, as deprives him of the Diſhes he beſt likes, and oftentimes confines him to thoſe he Loaths. Alaſs, How often might God ſay of our Requeſts, as *Chriſt* did of thoſe of the two aſpiring Diſciples, *Ye know not what ye ask?* I admire, and bluſh to read in an Heathen Satyriſt ſo Heavenly a Leſſon, as,

Permittes ipſis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris:
Nam pro Jucundis Utilia quæque dabunt Di,

Charior

Charior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi nos animorum
Impulſu, & cæca pravaque cupidine Duẽti,
Conjugium petimus partumque uxoris; at illis
Notum, qui pueri, qualiſque futura ſit uxor.

Unto the wiſer Gods the care permit,
Of what's for us and our Affairs moſt Fit.
They will for pleaſant things the Beſt confer;
To whom Man is than to himſelf, more dear.
We by our blinder Paſſions led aſtray,
Do for a Wife perhaps or Children pray:
Which they may chance refuſe us out of Love,
Knowing what both the Wife and Boys would prove.

The Conſideration of which made a Heathen Philoſopher ſay, That he was wont only in general terms to beg Good things of the Gods, leaving it to

them to determine what things were good for him. And indeed our own Wiſhes are but too commonly as blind as *Rachel's*, who having ſo eagerly longed for Children, that ſhe impatiently cries, *Give me Children, or elſe I dye*, died in Child-bearing: And as deſtructive to the Wiſhers, as their Longings prov'd to the murmuring *Iſraelites*, who loathing the wholeſome *Manna*, (that *Bread of Angels*) God had provided for them, are their own Bane in the Fleſh they had ſo greedily luſted for. Thus, *Lindamor*, that ſo affrighting Virtue of Self-denial proves to be little more than a Son's Letter of Attorney to his Father, of whoſe paternal Kindneſs and conſummate Abilities in the management of Affairs, his confidence amounts unto a certainty. Nay, till my ſecond Thoughts check'd the overforward Impetuoſity of my firſt, I was about to add, Since God reſents an infinite ſatisfaction in the Accompliſhment of his own Will, your Making over your whole Will to God, will impart to you that Felicity, proportioned to the degree of the Reſignment. And as the Eye, whilſt by the Optick Nerve ty'd unto the Head, ſo ching'd, can taſte Delights, which it is dead

Gen. 35. 8.

Num. 11. 33.

dead to, being once ſever'd from it, though (otherwiſe) it enjoy the beſt Condition of which its inanimate Nature can be ſuppos'd to be capable: So may your Will by an Identity or Sameneſs (in Tendency, though not in Nature) with your Maker's, as 'twere Engrafted into God's, receive a new and enlarged Capacity, which will enable you to contain and reliſh Joys, highly tranſcending thoſe, which the fulleſt Frution of your private Wiſhes were able to create. Thus Self-denial is a kind of Holy Aſſociation with God, and (by making you his Partner) intereſſes you in all his Happineſs and Acquiſitions. And conſonantly we ſee that Glorify'd Saints and Bleſſed Angels, whoſe will have the moſt exquiſite and exact Conformity to God's, enjoy a Happineſs moſt approaching his; whereas the Apoſtate Spirits, in a confirm'd repugnancy to his Will, find the extremity of wretchedneſs.

But though I dare not own, *Lindamor*, ſo bold a Sally, yet I dare without Scruple improve the Diſcourſe that preceeded it, to make out to you an advantageous difference of *Seraphick Love* from ordinary flames. For, he that makes, Sect. 5.

a Preſent of his Heart to any Mortal Beauty, even by her welcoming it, and Lodging it with her own, grows ſubject to have it wounded in her Breaſt. Thoſe miſfortunes reach him that would otherwiſe terminate in her: Her afflictions torment him, whilſt his own reprieve him; and the Felicity of two Perſons grows requiſite to make one Happy. The letting out our Love to mutable Objects, doth but enlarge our Hearts, and make them the wider marks for fortune, and capable of being wounded in more places: for, although Love may as well make us participate the Joys, as reſent the infelicities of the parties lov'd; yet even the leaſt unhappy Perſons do in ſo fickle and ſo tempeſtuous a Sea, as we all find this World, meet with ſo many more either croſs Winds, or ſtormy Guſts, than proſperous Gales; and we are ſo much more ſenſible of Pain than Pleaſure, (an aching Corn, though leſs than a Sickneſs, unfitting us to reliſh the otherwiſe perfect health of the whole Body) that even Friendſhip it ſelf, though a much calmer affection than Love, ought to be declin'd as injurious to our quiet, did we conſider it but as a Partnerſhip of Fortunes, nor an

an exerciſe of Virtues. But he, whoſe wiſer Love ſettles it ſelf on God, is not only by the Immutable, and even Eſſential Happineſs of that adorable Object, ſecur'd from participated Infelicities; but finds his perſonal Croſſes and Diſtreſſes ſweetned by conſidering, that what he moſt Loves is moſt Happy, and as able as willing in due time to make him ſo. And though *Seraphick Love* make us partake but God's Felicities, yet his acceptance of it makes him reſent our ſorrows: *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, ſays the Prophet of *God*, and of the *Iſraelites*. Eſa. 63. 9. And ſo the Son of God, (who is ſo much One with thoſe that love him, that both he as the Head, and they as the Members are ſometimes, as making up one Body, call'd by one Name, *Chriſt*) though as high as Heaven above the reach of perſonal or immediate perſecutions, call'd out to *Saul* for an intention of harming thoſe that lov'd him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* And to demonſtrate the tenderneſs of this compaſſion, the Prophet ſays to the return'd *Iſraelites*, concerning God, *He, that toucheth you toucheth the Apple of his Eye.* Nor is God's Compaſſion like a Miſtreſſes, a grieving only, 1 Cor. 15. 12. Zach. 2. 8

and an uſeleſs Pity, whereby the ſuffering Lover is oftentimes, leſs comforted, as it proceeds from her kindneſs, than afflicted, becauſe it breeds her diſquiet; but God's is a Compaſſion, though Active, yet Serene, and Worthy of himſelf, which without producing the diſcompoſure, produces the Effects of the moſt ſenſible Pity, by engaging him to a timely relief and reſcue: As that freſhly mentioned Expreſſion, *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, is immediately followed by, *and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them; in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old.* Yes, this Pity, for its not diſturbing God's Happineſs, enclines him not the leſs to expreſs a Senſe of our Miſeries, and makes us find (to uſe a Scripture Phraſe, as I would render it) εὑρεῖν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν *Grace for an opportune relief*, I ſay, with the Divine Writer, *an opportune* or *ſeaſonable relief*; becauſe it comes not always when it is moſt deſired; but when it is moſt fit; and when that is, he that hath at once all preſent, paſt, and future things in his proſpect, is fitteſt to determine. Chriſt's words to his Diſciples, (*It is not for you to know*

Heb. 4.16.

Acts 1. 7.

the

the Times or the Seaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power) are applicable to more caſes than that which occaſion'd them. The *Canaanitiſh* Woman muſt put up a Refuſal, and the Reproachful name of a Dog, (which yet by the way, was a Paraphraſe commonly enough us'd by the Jews of the Heathen, and as ſuch was underſtood by this Ἑλληνὶς *Gentile not Greek.*) The *Iſraelites* (compriſing the Patriarchs their Progenitors) were reduced to wait Four hundred and thirty years' e're they were introduced into the Promis'd Land; and during a great part of that long ſpace of time, languiſh'd and groan'd under the heavy Burthens, and other as heavy Preſſures, of the as cruelly as unſucceſsfully Politick *Ægyptians*. St. *Paul* himſelf pray'd the Lord thrice for the removal of that rude σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκὶ, *Thorn to the fleſh* (whatever that may mean) Nay, of the Bleſſed Virgin-Mother her ſelf, her Divine Son would not be found till the third day, though ſhe ſought him ſorrowing. And *Lazarus*, to whom, even during his Sickneſs, he vouchſafed (a Title, to which all *Ceſars* were but Trifles) the ſtyle of Friend, which emboldned the pious *Mary* to Paraphraſe him

Mat. 7. 27

The Text refers her extraction to *Syrophœnicia*, the ſame Region with *Canaan*.

Gal. 3. 17.

Ezek. 28. 24.

2 Cor. 32. 7.

Luk. 2. 48.

Joh. 11. 2.

Verſ. 3. by a *He whom thou lov'ſt*) was permitted not only to Lye a dying, but to Die; his Reſcue being deferr'd, till it was thought impoſſible; and was ſo indeed to any leſs Power than Omnipotence. Which manifeſts, that as no degree of Diſtreſs is unrelievable by his Power, ſo no Extremity of it is inconſiſtent with his Compaſſion, no, not with his Friendſhip.

Mal. 3.3. He whoſe Spirit inſpired the Prophets, is in the laſt of them repreſented under the notion of a Refiner: and 'tis not the cuſtom of Refiners to ſnatch the belov'd Metal out of the Fire, as ſoon as it feels the violence of that purifying Element; nay, nor as ſoon it is Melted by it, but they let it long endure the brunt of the active Flames, actuated by exciting Blaſts, till it have ſtood its due time in the Fire, and there obtain'd its full Purity and Splendor. And I hope, you will give one that converſes with Furnaces, though he be no Pretender to the Philoſophers Stone, leave to implore a Chimical Metaphor, and obſerve, that though in Afflictions, eſpecially National or Publick Calamities, God oftentimes ſeems to make no diſtinction betwixt the Objects of his Compaſſion, and thoſe of his Fury, indiſcriminately involving

involving them in the ſame Deſtiny; yet his Pre-ſcience and intentions make a vaſt difference, where his Inflictions do not ſeem to make Any: As, when on the ſame Teſt, and with the ſelf-ſame Fire, we urge as well the Gold as the blended Lead, or Antimony; but with fore-knowing and deſigning ſuch a diſparity in the Events, as to Conſume the ignobler Minerals, or blow them off into Droſs or Fumes, and make the Gold more pure and full of Luſtre.

It is true, *Lindamor*, and (not to be ſuſpected of Partiality towards a Love which ſo little needs it, to be thought fit to be preferr'd before all other Paſſions) I ſhall acknowledge it, that the Happineſs reſulting from thoſe many Prerogatives, I have endeavour'd to diſcover to you in a Tranſcendent degree of *Seraphick Love*, is moderated by the Effects of that Sublimity) the Eager Deſires it creates of a more compleat Fruition, of its perfect and Divine Object. Such aſpiring Sallies of the longing Soul made the languiſhing Spouſe in the *Canticles* cry out, *Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am ſick of Love*. Such made the raviſh'd Apoſtle deſire *to return* (for ſo I ſhould rather tranſlate *Self* 6. Cant. 2. 5. Phil. 1. 23.

tranſlate the word, ἀ ἀλῦσι there, and ſo
* Luk. 12. 36. I find it * elſewhere to ſignifie) *and to be with Chriſt:* And the inſpir'd Poet thus expreſſes his Longings to the Bleſſed Object of them,
Pſal. 41. 1. 2. *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God: when ſhall I come and appear before God?* But *Lindamor*, it was fit that to elevate our thoughts and wiſhes to Heaven, ſome peculiar, and elſewhere Incommunicable degree of Joy, ſhould be reſerv'd for us there. And 'tis a good Sign, and ſuch as worldly Objects cannot boaſt, when the Incompleatneſs of our Seraphick Lover's happineſs in his Fruitions, proceeds not from their want of Satisfactorineſs, but his want of an entire Poſſeſſion of them. And let me tell you *Lindamor*, that even this uneaſie State of Separation, is ſweetned with as much Allay as is conſiſtent with its being a Grief. For, the Divine Evidence and Teacher of God's Love pronouncing a Thirſt after Perfection to be a Title to it, (according to thoſe Scriptures,
Mat. 5. 6. Rev. 22. 17. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be ſatisfied.* And, *Let him that is a thirſt come, and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of Life freely*)

and

and the Joys of Heaven being ſo vaſt, that they diffuſe their Nature to all the grounded hopes men have to obtain them; each new aſſurance is a new degree of them, and is acceptable to our hope, though uneaſie to our deſires. And theſe baitings at compleat Felicity, ſhould not be more unwelcome for the preſent diſquiet they ſuppoſe, than the contrary for the zeal they argue and the Felicity they promiſe. For this Production of the Spirit in our Hearts may be juſtly termed as the Spirit himſelf in Scripture is, *An earneſt*; which though by being ſuch, it confeſſes it ſelf nor to be the entire Sum, yet it is not only a part of it, but a Pledge: And, *Lindamor*, how ſupportable is this thus qualify'd, Allay of the Joys of *Seraphick Love*, in compariſon of the Diſquiets, and the torments that are wont to attend ſenſual Love? I ſhall not loſe to enumerate how many it is ſupppos'd to have ſent to their Graves; becauſe, though I find thoſe Tragical Stories riſe enough in Romances, yet I find them Rarities every where but in thoſe fabulous Compoſures; and though I have had the Curioſity to viſit ſome of thoſe warmer Regions, where the Flames of

2 Cor. 5. 5.

Love

Love are thought to burn with more violence, yet (bating the Duels and the Pox) I remember not to have obſerv'd Love to have ever been the death of any Man; unleſs, ſpeaking like Philoſophers, who make reaſon the Eſſential Conſtituent Form of a Man: we will affirm, that Love, by dethroning Reaſon, though it leave the Lover alive, doth kill the Man. But, though I am loth to put ſo bad a Compliment upon Mankind, as to ſay, That Love is wont to deſtroy Mens Lives: yet I think it would be no calumny to ſay, it much diſquiets them. I could ask you, How long many a Lover muſt continue a Servant to purchaſe the Honor of being taken notice of to be ſo? And I could recruit that Queſtion with pretty ſtore of others of the like nature, but that I ſuppoſe your Memory will ſave my Pen the labour of repreſenting to you the Torments of Love, which they that feel them, would little leſs juſtly than they do frequently ſtyle Martydoms, if the greatneſs only, without the Cauſe and Object of Men's ſufferings, ſuffic'd to make them Martyrs. And though the Condition of Lovers be in Romances ſo dexterouſly and delightfully deſcrib'd, that not only

only ſanguine Readers are tranſported, but even I my ſelf have been ſurprized into inclinations, to admire and envy their Felicity; yet when ſome I was concern'd for, have been really concern'd and engag'd in ſome adventures, my envy quickly turn'd into pity. For, the Repulſes, the Regrets, the Jealouſies, the Fears, the Abſences, the Deſpairs, and the reſt of the afflicting Diſquiets of Lovers; though in well-writ Romances they are ſoon read over by the diverted Peruſer; yet they are not ſo ſoon weather'd out, nor ſo eaſily ſupported by the diſconſolate Lover, whoſe Infelicities, though they may be perhaps, ſo handſomely deplor'd, as to delight the Reader; yet truſt me, *Lindamor*, 'tis a much happier condition to be free from misfortunes, than to be able to complain eloquently of them. And as I have with delight beheld a Storm excellently drawn by ſome rare Artiſt's Penſil; but when I was this Spring toſt by the rude Winds that blew me out of *Holland*, I found a real Storm a very troubleſome and uneaſie thing: ſo the condition of a Lover, though drawn by a ſmooth Pen, is wont ſtrangely to affect and pleaſe us; yet

When

when Men are really engaged in it, they find it full of Hardſhips and Diſquiet. It is a much better Condition to be look'd on than embrac'd; and Experience gives Men of it much (ſadder and) more unwelcome Notions than Deſcription did. Nor Phaney, *Lindamor*, that the Troubleſomeneſs of your Sufferings in Love proceeded but from their not being acceptable to her for whom you endured them; for had your Miſtriſs Crown'd them with Myrtle, and prov'd as kind to you as *Hymen* could have made her, yet, I fear, ſhe could have recompenc'd you but by diſabuſing you, and could not have freed you from the need of Happineſs, but only from a miſtake concerning it; For, methinks, *Lindamor*, moſt of theſe Tranſitory Goods, that we are ſo fond of, may not unfitly be reſembled to the Senſitive Plant, which you have admir'd at *Sion-Garden*; for as, though we Gaze on it with Attention and Wonder, yet, when we come to touch it, the Coy deluſive Plant immediately ſhrinks in its diſplayed Leaves, and Contracts it ſelf into a Form and Dimenſions, diſadvantageouſly differing from the former; which it again recovers

covers by degrees, when touch'd no more: So theſe Objects that Charm us at a diſtance, and whilſt gaz'd on with the Eyes of Expectation and Deſire; when a more immediate Poſſeſſion hath put them into our Hands, their former Luſtre vaniſhes, and they appear quite differing things from what before they ſeem'd; though after Deprivation or abſence hath made us forget their Emptineſs, and we be reduc'd to look upon them again at a diſtance, they recover in moſt Mens eyes their former Beauty, and are as capable as before to inveigle and delude us. I muſt add, *Lindamor*, that when I compare to the Senſitive Plant moſt of theſe Tranſitory things, that are flatter'd with the Title of Goods, I do not out of that number except moſt Miſtreſſes. For, though I am no ſuch an Enemy to Matrimony, as ſome (for want of underſtanding the Raillery, I have ſometimes us'd in ordinary Diſcourſe) are pleas'd to think me, and would not refuſe you my Advice (though I would not ſo readily give you my Example) to turn Votary to *Hymen*; yet I have obſerv'd ſo few Happy Matches, and ſo many unfortunate ones; and have ſo rarely ſeen Men love

their

their Wives at the rate they did, whil'ſt they were their Miſtreſſes; that I wonder not that Legiſlators, thought it neceſſary to make Marriages indiſſoluble, to make them Laſting. And I cannot fitlier compare Marriage than to Lottery, for in Both, he that ventures may ſucceed, and may miſs, and if he draw a Prize, he hath a rich Return of his Venture: But in both Lotteries there lies pretty ſtore of Blanks for every Prize. And for your particular, *Lindamor*, the World is much miſtaken in both your Humors, if *Hermoine*'s and Yours be not ſo unſuitable, that (to make haſte from ſo nice a Subject) had ſhe juſtify'd your expectation of her kindneſs, you would have poſſeſs'd the Perſon without poſſeſſing the Happineſs you expected: And might have found your ſelf as ſenſibly diſappointed by her Grant, as you were by her Change.

But I forget, *Lindamor*, that I reſolv'd not to inſiſt on Parallels, and therefore, inſtead of proſecuting the Diſcourſe my Pen has ſlipt into, concerning the advantages of *Seraphick*, compar'd with ordinary Love; I ſhall venture to encourage you to the Former,

mer, by ſhewing you, that your paſt addictedneſs to the latter, may prove ſerviceable to you in it: Yes, *Lisdamor*, I ſhall not ſcruple to tell you, that your ſtrong paſſion for *Hermione* may not a little facilitate your Devotion, partly by breaking all the Chains, excepting one, that faſtned your affection to unſatisfying Objects, and reſtrain'd it from ſoaring to the ſublimeſt; and partly, by exalting your paſſion to a Height fit for *Seraphick* Flames. For, Love hath this of Noble, that it makes us diveſt our ſelves of Selfiſhneſs, ſlight fortune, quiet, ſafety, honour, life, and all our own Concernments, when their coming into Competition with the Loved Parties Intereſts, may render their ſacrifice acceptable to her; and makes us think Goods or Ills deſerve thoſe names, but as they come to us From or through Her, You could ſcarce have Learn'd a better Leſſon, even from a much better Maſter; for, Love having thus accuſtom'd you to (what is thought moſt difficult in that Virtue) the Acts of Self-denial, you need almoſt but Transfer your Flames from an Inferior and Miſtaken, to their True and Nobleſt Object, and you will have exalted and refined your Love into Devo-

tion; to the latter of which, a ſublime Elevation of the firſt is ſuch a Diſpoſition, as the having formerly, by looſer Airs, and (perchance) wanton Songs, learn'd to Improve and to Command ones Voice, is, to the skill of Singing thoſe devout Hymns and Heavenly Anthems; in which the Church-Militant ſeems ambitious to emulate the Triumphant, and Eccho back the ſolemn Praiſes and Hallelujahs of the Cœleſtial Quire. And, as by Hunting, though (poſſibly) we follow but ſome poor fugitive Hare, or ſome ſuch Trifling Game, we gain that Vigor, that Sufference, and Agility, that fits us for the Toils and Military Hardſhips that are exacted in the purſuit of Glory, and of Empire: So though in Love (Devotion's Prenticeſhip) the Courted Creature be often conſiderable enough, to make our Elections fit to be numbred among ſuch as thoſe that made Love be Painted Blind; yet in the Progreſs and Conduct of our Paſſion, we contract ſuch diſ-intereſſed and reſign'd Habitudes, as, being preferr'd to ſerve Cœleſtial Objects, do excellently qualifie us for Devotion. And in effect, a fervent Love ſeems little leſs than Devotion miſ-addreſt,

addreſt, where our own very Expreſſions may ſerve to diſabuſe us; For, when you gave your Miſtriſs the ſtyle of Goddeſs, and talk of nothing to her, but of Offering up of Hearts, Adoring, Sacrifices, Martyrdoms; does not all this imply, that though it be ſaid to Her, 'tis meant to a Divinity, which is ſo much the True and Genuine Object of Mens Love, that we cannot exalt that Paſſion for any other, without inveſting it with the Notions and Attributes of God? As Children diſcloſe the inbred kindneſs they have for thoſe perſons, by calling the Babies they moſt doat upon by their dear Mother's, or lov'd Nurſes Names. And, as *Aaron*, and the revolting Jews, by juſtifying to themſelves their Adoration of the Idols they had ſet up by attributing the Title of God to what they had ador'd, did tacitly acknowledge Adoration to be due only to the Deity: So does a Lover, by naming what he worſhips, a Divinity, tacitly confeſs the Deity to be the proper Object of that higheſt and peculiar ſtrain of Worſhip.

Exod. 32. verſe 4. 5. In the latter of which it is expreſly ſaid that the Feaſt was proclaimed. יהוה *To Jehovah*, the peculiar name of the true God.

And this Truth, *Lindamor*, the very fickleneſs of Lovers concurs to teſtifie: For what Men call, and think Incon- *Sect.* 8.

ſtancy, is nothing but a chaſe of perfect Beauties; which our Love fruitleſly follows and ſeeks in ſeveral Objects, becauſe he finds it not entire in any One; for, Creatures have but ſmall and obſcure fragments of it, which cannot fix, nor ſatisfie an appetite, born for, and (though unwillingly) aſpiring unto God: who is proclaim'd the true and proper Object of our Love, as well by Mens fickleneſs to Women, as the Angels conſtancy to Him. Juſt as the trembling reſtleſneſs of the Needle in any but the North Point of the Compaſs proceeds from, and manifeſts its inclination to the Pole; its Paſſion for which, both its Wavering and its Reſt bear equal witneſs to. That unſatisfy'dneſs with tranſitory Fruitions, that Men deplore as the Unhappineſs of their Nature, is indeed the Priviledge of it; as 'tis the Prerogative of Men not to care for, or be capable of being pleas'd with Whiſtles, Hobby-horſes, and ſuch fond Toys as Children doat upon, and make the ſole Objects of their Deſires and Joys. And by this you may, *Lindamor*, in ſome degree, imagine the unimaginable Suavity, that the fixing of ones Love on God is able to bleſs the

Soul

Soul with; ſince, by ſo indulgent a Father, and competent a Judge as God himſelf, the decreed uncontentingneſs of all other goods, is thought richly repaired by its being but an aptneſs to prove a Riſe to our Love's ſettling there.

And hitherto, my deareſt *Lindamor*, I have endeavour'd to recommend unto you *Seraphick Love*, by mentioning ſome of its properties, which ſeem to relate more to the Love it ſelf, than to the Divine Object of it. But I fear you'l think I have too long entertain'd you with conſiderations, which, beſides that they are not altogether the importanteſt that belong to this diſcourſe, I have been, by haſte reduc'd to Pen in the unaccurate Order, wherein they offer'd themſelves to my thoughts, not the Method wherein I ſhould have preſented them to Yours. *Sect.* 9.

And therefore, *Lindamor*, ſince the Nobleſt and Supreme Motives to the Love of God conſiſt in his own infinite Perfections and Prerogatives; and ſince the Properties of God's Love to us do advantage us much more, (and conſequently are likelier to endear Devotion to us) than thoſe of ours to him: The former not only moving God to kin- *Sect.* 10.

dle in us, but to Cheriſh and Foment, and (if our own wilful extinction interpoſe not) to Crown the latter: For both theſe Reaſons, I ſay, *Lindamor*, I doubt not but you'll think it ſeaſonable for me to proceed, to conſider that higher ſort of Motives to Devotion, and to evince, that the ſeveral things which are wont moſt to engage and heighten our affections, do, in a peculiar and tranſcendent manner, ſhine forth, and Conſtellate in God. That, you know, which enamour'd you of *Hermione*, I need not prove to you, to have been your ſuppoſing her full of Lovelineſs and Excellencies in her ſelf; and you believing, that the Love ſhe vouchſafed you was Great, Free, Conſtant, or Advantageous to you. And that all theſe properties do not only eminently exiſt, but illuſtriouſly concur in God, and his Love; I muſt now, *Lindamor*, (with ſtrong deſires of doing it proſperouſly) attempt to manifeſt.

Sect. 11. First then, our higheſt Love is made God's due, by the Excellency and Prerogative of his Nature. But, truſt me, *Lindamor*, when neceſſitated by a Method exacted by the nature of this diſcourſe (I find my ſelf engaged to ſay ſome-

ſomething by way of celebration of God's Perfections: I am very ſenſible, I can but detract from what I deſire to Praiſe, and muſt inevitably appear unable to ſpeak Worthily of a Theme, to which even *Seraphims* themſelves cannot do Right. And if, as the Scripture aſſures us, thoſe things even fell not under the Senſes, nor entred the Thoughts of Men, which God has reſerv'd for thoſe that love him; how ineffable and incomprehenſible muſt thoſe things be which he has reſerv'd for Himſelf? The infinite Superiority of his Nature above all Created Beings, placing a vaſt diſparity betwixt his greateſt communicated Vouchſafements, and his Boundleſs, and therefore to Creatures Incommunicable, Perfections. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

Wonder not therefore, *Lindamor*, that my weak Eyes dare not dwell long upon an Object, which they cannot ſtedfaſtly gaze on long without being dazl'd: And do not marvel, that I ſcruple not to uſe ſeeming Hyperboles in the mention of Perfections, which make the higheſt Hyperboles but ſeeming ones: Both God's Nature and his Word declaring him to be *exalted above all Bleſſing and Praiſe*. If it were ſeaſonable,

Lindamor, to entertain our ſelves but with thoſe Attributes of God, which are Legible or Conſpicuous in the Creation; We might there diſcern the admirable Traces of ſuch immenſe Power, ſuch unſearchable Wiſdom, and ſuch exuberant Goodneſs, as may juſtly raviſh us to an Amazement at them, rather than a bare Admiration of them. And I muſt needs acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that when with bold Teleſcopes I ſurvey the Old and Newly diſcover'd Stars and Planets that adorn the upper Region of the World; and when with excellent Microſcopes I diſcern in otherwiſe inviſible Objects, the unimitable Subtilty of Nature's curious Workmanſhip; and when, in a word, by the help of Anatomical Knives, and the light of Chimical Furnaces, I ſtudy the Book of Nature, and conſult the Gloſſes of *Ariſtotle*, *Epicurus*, *Paracelſus*, *Harvey*, *Helmont*, and other learn'd Expoſitors of that Inſtructive Volume; I find my ſelf oftentimes reduc'd to exclaim with the Pſalmiſt, *How manifold are thy Works, O Lord?* in *Wiſdom haſt thou made them all!* And when I have been loſing my ſelf in admiration of what I underſtand not, but enough

Pſal. 104. 24.

to

to admire, and not to Comprehend? I am often obliged to interrupt or break off my Enquiries, by applying to the Works of God's Creation the Expreſſion us'd by St. *Paul*, of thoſe of his Providence, *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways untraceable!* And Exclamations of this Nature may the attentive Conſideration of any other of God's Attributes deſervedly produce. But having elſewhere treated of this Subject in a peculiar Diſcourſe, I ſhall now, *Lindamor*, invite you to conſider with me, how much you, and thoſe that are Conſcious to their having Virtue enough in themſelves, to make them prize it in others, are in love with *Cato Scipio*, and thoſe other *Heroes*, that did Ennoble, and almoſt Exceed Mankind, upon the bare knowledge of their Virtues; although from them we derive no perſonal advantage, (their death having numerous Ages preceded our Nativity.) Since then we pay ſo much diſtintereſt love to ſome few faint and ill-refin'd Virtues, that ne'r did profit us; how much on ſuch a Score, and at that Rate, ſhould we love him, who ſo poſſeſſes all Perfection, that each of his Perfections is Infinite? Were you and I

Rom. 11. 33.

our

our own Creators, *Lindamor*, and wholly independent upon God, without either Need or Hope to taſte his Bounty; his native Excellencies, and what he has done for others, ſhould ſurely Raviſh us, and Enamour us of Him. Though his Benefits to us did not entitle him to our Love, his Eſſence (the Source and only Motive of thoſe Benefits) would give him a right to it; and though we ow'd him nought for what we are, we yet ſhould owe him Love for what he is. He is that glorious Sun, from whom (as Beams) all Created Perfections flow, and in whom they all concentre. To omit God's Sovereign Majeſty, (which places him ſo high, that but to own for him ſo Familiar and Levelling an affection as Love, much more to expect to be Revolv'd by Him, were not the leaſt ſawcy Preſumption Man could be guilty of, did not his his own Commands make it a Duty.) Not to inſiſt on this, I ſay, Let us a while conſider that proper and peculiar attraction of Love, his Lovelineſs; which is ſuch, that did we but once ſee it, all Creature-competitions (even we being Judges) would then be as impoſſible as they are now unjuſt. In *the Fifth Evangeliſt*'s Prophetick Viſions, the Seraphims them-

Iſai. 6. 7.

themſelves (thoſe glorious Ornaments of the Cœleſtial Hierarchy) are repreſented as covering their Faces in God's preſence, either bluſhing at their Comparative Deformity, or unable to ſuſtain the unqualifi'd ſplendor of ſo Divine brightneſs; whence perhaps it became of old the Jewiſh faſhion (as ſome frequent expreſſions in their Writers intimate) when they went to pray, to veil their heads and faces;) though now I have in their Synagogue ſeen them only cover their head, not their faces, with thoſe white Garments they wear at their publick Devotions.) And, *Lindamor*, if *Moſes*'s face, by but a few days converſe with God, reflected ſuch a Light as dazl'd mortal Eyes; and if his ſwift Poſts the Angels, when ſent on Errands to us here on Earth, even when they may be ſuppos'd (if I may ſo ſpeak) to wear their travelling Cloths, and ſtood as much to our Frailty in the Form, as the Region, they appear to us in, do, in ſpite of that darkning Condeſcention, ſo much Tranſcend all Objects here on Earth, that the Scripture often mentions, that even thoſe that aſpir'd to imitate their Virtues, were confounded at their preſence: And if, in this veiling habit, they appear ſo glorious

that

that their thus disadvantaged Beauty is made the Complement and Hyperbole of that Quality; what may we, or rather, what may we not conclude of God himself, of whom the Scripture says, *He that planted the Ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the Eye, shall he not see?* That is, he that imparts a Faculty, or an Excellence to the Creature, shall not he himself much more eminently possess it? and in effect, the most unblemished Created Beauties are but faint shadows, (or trulier, Foils) of His. Those drops of Prettiness, scatteringly sprinkled amongst the Creatures, were design'd to Defecate and Exalt our Conceptions, not to Inveigle or Detain our Passions; for, God did ne'er intend them to terminate our Love, but only by our Eyes to exalt our Faith above them, and by the Beauties our sight can apprehend to raise us to a confidence, that there is in their Author more than we can either See or Comprehend. Like *Elijah*'s fiery Chariots, though they be pure and bright, and consist of the noblest and gloriousest Materials, they are meant by God but to carry us up to Him. And as the Patriarchs Steward was furnish'd with so sumptuous an Equipage to court *Rebecca*, not for himself, but for *Isaac*

Psal. 94. 9.

2 King. 2. 11.

Gen. 24. 10–55.

Isaac; so all the Loveliness imparted to the Creature is lent it, but to give us some more large Conceptions of that vast Confluence and immensity that exuberates in God. To make the rightest use of fading Beauties, you must consider God and them, as you were wont to do your Mistresses Picture, and its Chrystal Cover: Where, though that native Glass were Pure and Lovely, and very richly edg'd, yet to gaze on it, was not the chiefest business of your Eye; nor did you in it terminate your sight, but greedily look through and beyond it, upon the adored Image that solid veil betraid. Methinks *Seraphick* and our common *Lovers* behold exterior Beauties with a difference resembling that wherewith Children and Astronomers consider *Galileo*'s Optick Glasses, (with one of which *Telescopioes*, that I remember I saw at *Florence*, he merrily boasted that he had, *Trovato la Corte a Giove*,) which the one prizes most for what they appear; the other for what they discover. For Children contenting themselves to wonder at the length, and fall in love with the Workmanship and Gildings of the Tube, do thus but gaze upon them; whereas Astronomers look through them, and

scarce

ſcarce taking notice of the unuſual Ornaments, or the ſhape, employ them to find out unknown Lights in the Sky, and to diſcry in Heaven bright Stars, unſeen before, and other Cœleſtial Novelties and Beauties.

Sect. 12. I deny not, *Lindamor*, that God has been pleas'd to adorn ſome of his Creatures with Hints and Impreſſes, as well of his Lovelineſs as his other Excellencies; but they do much more faintly and imperfectly reſemble him, than the counterfeit Sun we ſee ſometimes in a Cloud emulates the true one, by whoſe refracted and Reflected Beams, ſome accute modern Naturaliſts ſuppoſe it to be produc'd. For tho' this Derivative Sun-ſhine with a not-inconſiderable Luſtre, Comparatively to the reſt of the dark Cloud enobles it, yet is it not only as much inferior to the true *Sun* in Brightneſs, as in height; but it enjoys alone a Precarious, Dependent, and almoſt Momentary Being, which often it loſes in a very ſhort time, and never attains to preſerve a very long one. And therefore to neglect that ſupream Reſplendency that ſhines in God, for thoſe dim Repreſentations of it, that we ſo doat on in the Creature, is as prepoſterous and abſurd

ſurd, as it were for a Perſian to offer his Sacrifice to a Parhelion (as the *Greeks* call that Meteor) inſtead of adoring the Sun. And certainly, *Lindamor*, if our Dim Sight, like that of the Prophet's Servant, who ſaw the Mountains near *Dothan* covered with Horſes and Chariots of Fire, were priviledg'd to diſcern otherwiſe invisible Objects; our raviſh'd Eyes would behold Lovelineſs enough in God, to make us inceſſantly exclaim in the Language of the Prophet, *How great is his Goodneſs, and how great is his Beauty!* Agreeable whereunto we may obſerve, That as the Loadſtone doth attract moſt powerfully the brighteſt Needles, made of the pureſt Steel, and thoſe that moſt approach it; ſo Angels who, of all Created Beings, enjoy the uncloudedſt Light, and the moſt clear Knowledge of their Maker, do love him with a Conſtancy ſo fix'd, that in five thouſand and ſome odd Centuries of years, (efflux'd ſince the Creation) they could never ſee any thing, either in God, or out of him, capable to ſeduce them to a Change. God's Lovelineſs (which is ſuch, that the Eternal fruition of himſelf creates even his Felicity) is like rare Muſick, which tho it do delight all its partakers, the knowingſt Artiſts

2 King. 6. 27.

Zach. 9. 17.

ſtill

ſtill do highlieſt value, and are moſt raviſh'd with the Tranſports it produceth, being proportion'd to the degrees of the skilfulneſs of its admirers. The Apoſtate Spirits indeed deſerted their firſt Station, not frighted thence by any blemiſh they deſcry'd in God; but probably fell by a ſawcy affectation of a Parity, and (as Divines tell us) a Sacrilegious aſpiring to Perfections, which they were criminally unable to behold, without wiſhing them their own. And for their preſent ſeparation from God, it is their Curſe and Puniſhment. And I ſhall ingenuouſly confeſs to you, *Lindamor*, that by the advantageous Idea's I entertain'd of God's Perfections, I have been ſometimes inclin'd to think, that the reaſon why God tells *Moſes*, *Thou canſt not ſee my Face, for there ſhall no Man ſee me and live*, might be, that (as tranſcendent Objects deſtroy the Senſe) ſo lovely and glorious a ſight (whoſe continuance ſhall make our Happineſs in Heaven) would let in Joys, and would create Deſires, too Mighty for frail Mortality to ſuſtain. The raviſh'd Soul being ſhewn ſuch Game as that, would hate ſo eagerly, that ſhe would break thoſe Leaſhes that tye her to the Body, (and thereby hinder her flight to that wiſh'd Union) and

Exod. 33. 20.

and the glad Heart (too narrow a Receptacle for ſo much Joy) to make room for ſuch Gueſts, would ſtretch unto a Rupture, Longing, or Joy, have ſometimes ſingly reach'd Degrees that have made them Fatal; And why then ſhould their Union in ſuch Extremes be thought uncapable of producing the like effect? Nor is it perchance more a Priviledge of the next Life, that we ſhall then ſee God, than that we ſhall ſurvive that Glorious Sight; which is too dazling an Object for Mortal Eyes, till (to uſe St. *Paul*'s Expreſſion) *our mortal ſhall have put on immortality*. But I muſt no longer loſe my ſelf in a Theme, on which it is ſo eaſie to ſpeak Much, and ſo impoſſible to ſay Enough. If I be not very much miſtaken, they are ſo, who preſume to give us ſatisfactory Definitions of God's Nature, which we may perhaps more ſafely Define by the Impoſſibility of its being accurately Defined. And I muſt confeſs, I do the leaſt expect the beſt Deſcription of the Divine Nature, from thoſe that are moſt forward to take upon them to Explicate it: For our Words being but the Repreſentations of our Notions, and they being neceſſary Finite, as our Being; few men are (methinks) more likely to be miſtaken in the Nature of whats

1 Cor. 15. 54.

Infinite, (and consequently of God's Attributes) than those that think Descriptions can comprize it. Nor will an Assiduity and Constancy of our speculations herein relieve us, for too fix'd a Contemplation of Gods Essence does but the more confound us. As I remember, St. *Paul* tells the *Jews*, that he *could not see for the Glory of that Light*, that shone from Heaven about him at his Conversion. And this the famous *Simonides* experimentally found, who being ask'd what God was, took a days time to consider of it; after, being call'd upon for his answer, he desir'd two days longer to think upon it; and when they were expir'd, demanded four days longer; and so continu'd a great while, each time Encreasing his demands for Respite; till, being prest to give an Account of such a Dilatory way of proceeding, he ingenuously aknowledg'd that the longer he consider'd Gods Nature the less he comprehended it. And indeed, Experience teacheth us, that they that gaze stedfastliest on the noondays Sun can least of all discern what it is, being rather Dazl'd than Instructed by so confounding an Object Nor, is it only, *Lindamor*, a Task of too difficulty for a meer man, perfectly to Explicate that Incomprehensible Nature of God,

Acts 22.6. 11,

to

to which nothing but his own Infinite Underſtanding can be adæquate: But, methinks, even to celebrate God's perfections cannot be ſoberly attempted without a very deep ſenſe of a man's own unworthineſs and incapacity. For, the ſame Excellencies that furniſh us with Praiſes, do tranſcend them. And the Fruitfulneſs of the Subject may as well deter, as invite our Pens; ſince, as we are ſure we ſhal not want Theme, ſo we are certain we cannot Dignifie it. And for my part, *Lindamor*, though my Subject exacted of me the Praiſes I have endeavoured to aſcribe to God, yet I ſhould have thougt it requiſite rather to decline the Laws of Method, than be reduc'd to Derogate from what I would extol, if the neceſſity of detracting from Gods perfections were not equal to that of mentioning them; and if that neceſſity were not as Glorious to God, as greater Praiſes than we are able to aſcribe him, could be. But, *Lindamor*, having thus done right to my Method, though I could not to my Theme, I ſhall only invite you to imitate with me thoſe Perſians, that adored the Sun, though the light he lent them ſerv'd but to make the ſource of it admired, and not to pry into his abſtruſe Eſſence with it. And though I might

ſay much more concerning God's Perfections, I muſt henceforth think ſilence the propereſt Language I can now employ; for 'tis ſilence that beſt expreſſes our Wonder: And ſure, Wonder is never more ſeaſonable than when God is the Object; A proſtrate Veneration being the ſafeſt apprehenſion of him that is incomprehenſible.

Sect. 13. Having thus conſidered, *Lindamor*, how fit an Object God is of our higheſt Love; for what he is in himſelf; let us now proceed to derive further proofs of the ſame Truth, from what he is to us, (that your Gratitude may contend with your Reaſon, which ſhall moſt heighten your Devotion) and we ſhall find in the Vaſtneſs, Freeneſs, Diſ-intereſtneſs, Conſtancy, and Advantageouſnes of his Love to us, that more than all the Love we can pay him, were but a little part of what we owe him.

But for the firſt Attribute, we have aſſign'd his Love, (the Greatneſs of it) it being a general Property, diffuſed through all the reſt, and conſpicuous in them, it requires now to be treated of apart.

We ſhall then proceed to the freeneſs or unmeritedneſs of God's love; To believe

lieve which ſtrangely vaſt, we need but conſider, that we ſo little could at firſt deſerve his Love, that he lov'd us even before we had a Being: and our Felicity in his degrees, preceded our exiſtence in this World. God lov'd your numerous ages before you were; and his Goodneſs is ſo entirely its own Motive, that even your Creation (ſince when alone you can pretend to merit his love) is the effect of it. This benefit alone were ſufficient to render God the Object of our Love, though we were that of his Averſion. For (as the *Perſians* ador'd the Sun even when it ſcorch'd them) we eſteem our ſelves obliged to love and honour our Parents in ſpight of their being wicked and unkind, though they be but God's inſtrument in our Production, and made us what we were born, not arbitrarily, but in virtue of his Ordination. But God to confer on us, in the moſt excellent and endearing manner, the Bleſſing promi'sd to his Antient People, when he vouchſafed to aſſure them, that *he would love them freely*, was pleaſed to love us not only when we were not at all, but when we were his Enemies, *If when we were Enemies* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son*, &c. Our Inexiſtence indeed

Hoſ. 14. 1

Rom. 5. 10

indeed was a condition, wherein nothing in us was capable of being a Motive of God's Love; but our enmity proceeded further, and made us worthy of his Deteſtation; as if his Love were nothing unleſs it vanquiſh'd Obſtacles, as well as wanted Motives. This gave the Apoſtle a juſt cauſe to ſay, that *God Commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us*: That is, when we wanted all Motives to invite his Love, unleſs our very want of them ſhould paſs for one. And how did God expreſs his Love unto us? even by the gift of the Son of his Love; *For God ſo loved the World*, (ſays the Divine Token of his Love) *that he gave his only begoten Son.* And how did that Son Love it? *He* (ſays the Apoſtle) *being in the form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of men. And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs.* That is, That he would love at no leſs Rate than death; and from the ſuper-eminent height of Glory, ſtoop'd and abas'd himſelf to the ſufferance of the extreameſt of Indignities, and ſunk himſelf to the bottom

Rom. 5. 8.

Phil. 2. 6. 7, 8.

tom of Abjectedneſs, to exalt our condition to the contrary Extreme *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſion, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed,* ſays the Prophet. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich,* ſays the Apoſtle. Men having diſpleaſed God, and conſequently forfeited all Right and Natural Poſſibility to Happineſs; even whil'ſt they compleated the Forlorneſs of their condition, by the Lethargy of not being ſenſible of it, and were as carleſs to Seek means of Recovery, as they had been unable to Deviſe them of themſelves: Even then, his reſtleſs Love, would never be at quiet, till it had ſet his Omniſcience on work, to contrive Expedients, and find out a way to reconcile his Juſtice and his Mercy, in reconciling Sinners to Himſelf. And this mercifull Deſign, by the Incarnation of his Son, he proſecuted in a way ſo Worthy of himſelf, and ſo advantageous to us, that our juſt wonder at it may keep us from having any, to find that, as St. *Pe-* informs us, the very Angels (prompted, queſtionleſs by a Religious Curioſity)

Iſa. 53. 5.

2 Cor. 8. 2.

1 Pet. 1. 12. Mat. 23. 7. Joh. 10. 30. ardently *desire to look into* those Divine Mysteries. I find it hotly disputed amongst Divines, (not only betwixt the Socinians and the Orthodox, but betwixt Orthodox and Orthodox) whether or no God could without violating his Justice, have devised any other Course for the Expiation of Sin, than the Passion and Death of Christ. But, without venturing to Determine, whether or no God could to Redeem us, have chosen any other way; We may safely think, that he has chosen the most obliging and most Endearing way; displaying in this Divine Manner of Rescuing us, the severest Justice, and the highest Mercy; the greatest Hatred of Sin, and the greatest Love to Sinners: Since by those unequall'd and unvaluable Sufferings, to which he delivered up for us that Son, who is so near unto him, that he truly said, *I and the Father are one*, He at once manifested both how much he hated Sin, which he so heavily punish'd in the Person he most Lov'd; (though that Surety but adopted it, to free Men from the Insupportable vengeance of it) and how much he Lov'd Sinners, by giving up what he so lov'd for a Ransom of those that were guilty of what he so Hated. And therefore our Saviour,

viour, though he did ſuch great things to ſatisfie the unbelieving and contumacious Jews of his being their promis'd *Meſſiah*, would not decline Death to convince them; And, though he had not ſeldom done ſo much to make himſelf the Object of their Faith would not be invited from the Croſs, though the Chief Prieſts and Scribes themſelves ſaid at his Crucifixion, *Let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe on him.* And Chriſt to convince Mat. 23. 7. the World of their unableneſs to emerge and recover out of that deep Abyſs, wherein the Load of Sin (which in Scripture is called a *weight*) had Precipitated Fall'n Man, came not into the World until well Heb. 12. 1. nigh 4000 Years of Sickneſs had made the Diſeaſe deſperate, and the Cure almoſt Hopeleſs. So inveterate an obſtinacy at once widening the Diſtance betwixt God and Man and proclaiming the latter's diſability to find by his own Wiſdom, Expedi- Mat. 9. 32. ents of Re-union. Thus Chriſt heal'd and dipoſſeſs'd a Dumb perſon, who was able to make entreaties but by the diſability of pronouncing them; and might truly ſay Iſa. 65. 1. to the ſecure World, *I am found of them that ſought me not.* And when our Saviour was come into the wretched World, of all

all the numerous Miracles recorded in the Gospel, he scarce did any for his own private Relief. And to shew, that as he endured his Sorrows for our sakes, that by *his*
Isa.53.5. *stripes* we might *be healed*, so were the Joys he tasted in relation to us. We read not (which is highly observable) in the whole Gospel, that ever he rejoyc'd but once, and that was, when his return'd Disciples inform'd him, that they victoriously *chas'd Devils* and *Di-*
Luk. 10. *seases* out of *oppressed Mortals*, and that by his *Authority* Men had been dispossess'd of both the Tempter and Punishment of Sin. He convers'd among his Contemporaries with Virtues, as well attesting what he was, as Prophecies or Miracles could do; and to Teach Man, how much he valu'd Him above those Creatures that Man makes his Idols, he often altered and suspended the Course of Nature for Man's Instruction, or his Relief, and revers'd the Laws establish'd in the Universe, to engage Men to obey those of God, by doing
Mat.12.24. Miracles so numerous and great, that the Jews Unbelief may be almost counted One.
Mar. 3.12. Yet were those Wonders wrought for a Generation that ascrib'd them to the Devil, and retun'd them with so exemplifi'd an gratitude, that 'tis not the least of his Wonders

wonders, that he would vouchſafe to work any of them for ſuch blaſphemons wretches: who were indeed, as ſome of the latter Jews have too truly ſtyl'd themſelves, in relation to their Fathers, *Chometz ben ya-yin*, Vinegar the Child of Wine, a moſt degenerate Off-ſpring of Holy Progenitors. He ſuffer'd ſo much for them, that made him do ſo, that he ſuffer'd the addition of Miſery of being thought to ſuffer deſervedly; *And he was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors.* Isa.53.12. And though he liv'd as much a Miracle as any he did, yet did his condition ſometimes appear ſo deſpicable and forlorn, that Men could not know his Deity but by his Goodneſs, which was ſo infinite not to belong incommunicably to God. And though 'twere once a ſaying of our *Saviour*, *Greater Love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends*; Joh.15.13 yet is not what is ſaid of the love here mention'd, to be underſtood indefinitely, or generally conſidered, but only of the ſingle acts or expreſſions of a Man's love to his Friends compar'd betwixt themſelves. And ſo the alledg'd paſſage ſeems to mean but this, That among the ſingle Acts of kindneſs to a Man's friends, there is not any one more highly expreſſive of a real and

and ſincere Love, than to part with ones life for their ſakes. This Text therefore would not be indefinitely apply'd to the Affection of Love it ſelf, as if it could not poſſibly be greater than is requiſite to make a Man Content, or willing to Die for his Friends: for he that Sacrifices beſides his Life, his Fortune alſo, his Children or his Reputation, does thereby Expreſs more Love to them, than he could do by parting with his Life only for them. And he that is forward to die for thoſe that hate him, or, at leaſt, know him not, diſcloſes a more plentiful and exuberant ſtock of Love, than he that does the ſame kindneſs but for thoſe that Love him. And thus our Saviour would be underſtood, unleſs we would ſay, that he Out-practis'd what he taught; for he came to lay down his Life, even for his Enemies, and (like the kind Balſam-tree, whoſe Healing Wounds weep Sovereign Balm to cure thoſe that made them) he refus'd not to die for thoſe that kill'd him and ſhed his Blood for ſome of thoſe that ſpilt it. And ſo little was his injur'd Love to the ungrateful World, diſcourag'd or impair'd by the Savage Entertainment he met with in it, that, after he had ſuffer'd from wretched Men (for whoſe ſakes he left Hea-

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ven to become capable of ſuffering) ſuch barbarous Indignities as might have made bare puniſhments appear Mercy, and even cruelty it ſelf ſeem no more than Juſtice; when, I ſay, to hope for ſo much as his Pardon were preſumption, he was pleas'd to create Confidence of no leſs than his Love, a Virtue. Nor think it, *Lindamor*, impertinent to our preſent Theme, that I inſiſt ſo much on what Chriſt has done and ſuffer'd for us, ſince both he himſelf informs us, that *He and his Father are one.* And ſome of the Texts already mention'd have taught us, that it was an effect of God's love alſo to the World, that *He gave his only begotten Son to Redeem us*; and That *God commendeth his Love towards us in that While we were yet Sinners Chriſt died for us.* Wherefore I ſhall without ſcruple proceed to obſerve to you, that ſo free is Chriſt's dilection, that the grand condition of our Felicity is our Belief, that he is diſpoſed to make us happy; on terms not only ſo honourable to him, but ſo advantageous to us, that I was about to ſay, that poſſibly Faith it ſelf would ſcarce be exacted as requiſite to our Happineſs, but that the condition does encreaſe the benefit, by vouchſafing us bold and early anticipations of it: For,

Joh. 10. 30. *See alſo* v. Joh. 14. 9, 10. 11. Joh. 3. 16. Rom. 5. 8.

Faith,

Faith being as the Apoſtle terms it) *the*
Heb. 11.1. *ſubſtance of things hoped for, and evidence* (or conviction) *of things not ſeen*, wafts our joys to this ſide of the Grave, bows Heaven down to us, till our freed Spirits can ſoar up to Heaven; and does us ſuch a ſervice, as the the Jewiſh Spies did to their Country-men, by bringing them over to
Numb. 13. 23. 27 this ſide *Jordan* into the Wilderneſs, ſome of the pleaſant and delicious Fruits of the Bleſt Land of Promiſe. I ſaid, *Lindamor*, that Faith was the Grand Condition required in God's free Grant of Eternal Life. Not that I would aſcribe any thing to a Lazy, Speculative, and Barren Faith in oppoſition to that lively and active one, which
Gal. 5.2.6. is called by the Apoſtle, πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη *Faith operating by Love*; ſince I am informed by St. *James*, that the Divorce of Faith
Jam. 2.6. and Works is as deſtructive to Religion, as that of Soul and Body is to Life; But that I was willing to mind you, that though
Gen. 30. true Faith (which cries like *Rachel, Give me Children or elſe I dye*) be ever the pregnant Mother of good Works, yet are not thoſe Works the cauſe, but the Effects and Signs of God's firſt Love to Men, (however afterward the Children may Nurſe their Parents,) As, though the Needle's pointing

ing at the Poles be, by being an Effect, an Argument of its having been Invigorated by the Loadſtone, or received Influence from ſome other Magnetick Body; yet is not that Reſpect unto the North the Cauſe, but the Operation of the Iron's being drawn by the attractive Mineral. *Thou art good and doſt good*, ſays the Pſalmiſt to his Maker. The greatneſs of his goodneſs is that which makes it ours; nor doth He do us good, becauſe that we are good, but becauſe He is liberally ſo; as the Sun ſhines on Dunghils, not out of any Invitation his Beams find there, but becauſe it is his Nature to be diffuſive of his Light. Yet with this difference, that where as the Sun's Bounty by being rather an advantage to us than a Favour, deſerves our Joy and not our Thanks, becauſe his Viſits are made deſignleſly, and without any particular intention of addreſs (by ſuch a bare Neceſſity of Nature, as that which makes Springs flow out into Streams, when their Beds are too narrow to contain the renewed water that doth inceſſantly ſwell the exuberant Soutces;) God on the contrary, for being neceſſarily kind, is not leſs freely or Obligingly ſo, to You or Me; for, though ſome kind of Communicativeneſs be Eſſential

Pſal. 119. 68.

Eſſential to his Goodneſs, yet his Extenſion of it without himſelf, and his Vouchſafing it to this or that particular Perſon, are purely Arbitrary. To omit his Love to the numberleſs Elect Angels; the ſtrict Relations betwixt the Perſons of the Bleſſed Trinity, ſupplying God with Internal Objects, which imploy'd his kindneſs before the Creation, and Himſelf being able to allow his Goodneſs the Extent of Infinity for its Diffuſion. But (having glanc'd at this only by the by) we may yet further admiringly obſerve, That whereas Men uſually give freeliest where they have not given before, and make it both the Motive and the Excuſe of their deſiſtance from giving any more, That they have giving already. Gods bounty hath a very different Method; for he uſes to give, becauſe he hath given, and that he may give, Conſonantly to which, when the revolting *Iſraelites* had broken the Contents, whilſt *Moſes* was brining them the Tables of the LAW, and had thereby provok'd the Incenſed Giver of it to the thoughts of a ſudden Extirpation of ſo Ingrateful and Rebellious a People; we may obſerve, That, whereas God, as unwilling to remember his former Goodneſs to them, ſpeaking to *Moſes*, calls them,

them, *Thy people which thou broughtest out of the Land of* Ægypt: *Moses*, on the other side, to engage God to the new mercy of a Pardon, represents to God his former mercy to them, and calls them *God's people*, which *He brought forth out of the Land of* Ægypt, *with great power and with a mighty hand.* And so conspicuous in the Eternal Son was this property of the Merciful Father, that when sick *Lazarus*'s Sisters implored his Rescue for their expiring Brother, the Motive they employ, and which Prosper'd their addresses, was, *Lord, behold,* (not, he who loveth thee, but) *he whom thou lovest, is sick.* And as he takes the first inducements of his Bounty from Himself; so do his former Favours both invite and give Rates to his succeeding Blessings. And there is reason for it: For his pure Love being all the Merit, by which Man can pretend to the Effects of his Bounty; it is but just, that the Degree of his Love should Proportion those Favours, which 'tis our only Title to; and that God's Liberality should as well afford Measures as Motives to it self.

Exod. 32. 7.

Verse 11.

Joh. 11. 3.

Nor is God's love less Dis-interess'd than Free. His grand Design upon us is but to make us Instruments and Partakers of His Glory, and to bring us to everlast-

Sect. 14.

ing Happineſs, by a Way that does as well elevate and dignifie our Nature, as the Condition reſerv'd for us will. His Method of ſaving us if but compli'd with, does here, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Fit us for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; We being made (as S. *Peter* ſpeaks) *Partakers of the Divine Nature, having eſcap'd the corruption that is in the World thro' Luſt*. So that thoſe things, wherein the nobleſt of the Philoſophers plac'd their Felicity, ſerve but to qualifie and prepare Chriſtians for that Higher Bleſſedneſs that is reſerv'd by God for thoſe that love him; and cannot but be heighten'd and endear'd by the Value, which Graces and Virtues had given men on Earth, for ſuch a Noble and Rational kind of Happineſs, as is apportion'd to them in Heaven. What ends can he have upon us, whoſe Goodneſs and his Bleſſedneſs are both Infinite? He was unconceivably Happy (in his own Self-ſufficiency) before the Creatures had a Being; and ſure that Felicity that needed not Themſelves to be ſupreme, needs nothing that they can do. Nor was it his Indigence that forced him to make the World, thereby to make new Acqui-

Col 1. 12.

2 Pet. 1. 4.

——— *Quid enim immortalibus atque beatis, Gratia noſtra queat largirier Emolumenti, ut noſtrâ quidquam cauſâ gerere aggrediantur?* Lucret. ex Epic.

Acquiſitions, but his goodneſs that preſs'd him to manifeſt, and to impart his Glory; and the Goods which he ſo overflowingly abounds with. Witneſs his ſuſpenſion of the World's Creation, which certainly had had an earlier Date, were the Deity capable of want, and the Creatures of Supplying it. St. *Paul* in his Epiſtle to *Timothy*, ſtiles God Μακάριος, which we Tranſlate, *The bleſſed God*, but may perhaps more properly be render'd *the happy God*: and elſewhere in the ſame Epiſtle he truly calls him *The Happy*, as well as *Only Potentate*. *God* (ſays the Apoſtle) *that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not*, &c. *As though He needed any thing, ſeeing that He giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all things*. And, *in Him, we live, and move, and have our being*. And indeed ſo coherent in the mind of a mere Man, that does but conſider and underſtand the Import of his own Notions, is the belief of God's Happineſs to that of his Being; that I remember the Epicurean *Lucretius* himſelf, even in that impious paſſage, where he denies Divine Providence; and in a ſeeming, but injurious Compliment, would, under the pretence of eaſing God of it, deprive Him

1 Tim. 11.

1 Tim. 6, 15.

Act. 17. 24. 25. 26.

of the government of the World; does yet confeſs, that the Divine Nature muſt neceſſarily enjoy a Supreme and endleſs Tranquillity adding, (to bring this to our preſent purpoſe) that 'tis

———*Privata dolore omni, privata periclis;*
Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus, nihil indiga noſtri.

Whereby he acknowledges,

That from all griefs and dangers of them free'd,
Rich in it ſelf, it has of us no need.

Or, if you will have him ſpeak of the God's in the Plural, like a Heathen Poet, that

Far above griefs and dangers, thoſe bleſt powers,
Rich in their Native Goods, need none of ours.

A much Nobler Poet tells us, That *the* Pſal. 24 1. *Earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein.* Agreeably whereunto, that *Great God that* Prov. 26, 10. *formed all things,* (as in our Tranſlation the Scripture calls him) ſays in one of the Pſalms,

pſalms, *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the World is mine, and the fulneſs thereof.* Pſal. 50. 12.

His Ubiquity excludes all wiſhes of Remove, by making his Eſſence uncapable of excluſion; for, Whither ſhould he deſire to tranſport himſelf that is every where, and can wiſh himſelf in no place where he is not already? his ſufficiency is ſuch, that he can ſee no Goods, but what he gives or hath, (or rather both beſtows and poſſeſſes) his plenty being ſo unexhauſted a Spring of Goods that his Liberality does leſs impoveriſh God, than the Sun's light does him; or imparted knowledge impairs the Teacher's Stock. And therefore, though St. *James* doth very juſtly call God *The Father of Lights*, who is the beſtower of every good and every perfect Gift; yet the *Friend of God*, (as the Scripture calls *Abraham*) and that Royal Prieſt, (whom the Writer to the Hebrews teaches us to have been ſo illuſtrious a Type of Him, whom he calls. *The High Prieſt of our Profeſſion*) do both of them in the ſame Chapter ſtile him, *The Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* No, no, God needs not beg from, nor covet in the Creatures ſhallow ſtreams, thoſe goods, of which he not only hath, but is the ſource. Our greateſt ſervices to our Creator muſt be

Jam. 1. 17. Jam. 2. 2. Heb. 7. pe: totum. Heb. 3. 1. Gen. 14. 18, 22.

to discharge our selves, not to advantage him, nor as thinking to add any thing to a Felicity which were not infinite, could it admit encrease. Our highest Performances, though they be Dues, amount not unto Tributes, but are rather like those Pepper-corns of Rent which Free-holders pay, not with hope or with intent to enrich their Landlord, but to acknowledge, that they hold all from him. When we admire the Sun, our seeing of his Light doth not increase it, it makes it not greater, but only it makes it ours; and when we turn away, or shut our Eyes, that glorious Planet suffers no Eclipse, and is not at all darkned or impair'd, nor doth He thereby lose his light, but We: The easiness of the application requires, and excuses its omission, *If thou sinneth,* (says *Elihu* in *Job*) *what dost thou against him? if thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand: Thy wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the Son of Man.* In effect, the wicked's spite against God is but like a mad mans running his head against the Wall, that leaves the Wall unshaken, but dashes his own Brains out. God *inhabits* a Felicity (as well as *Light*) *inaccessible* to all inferior attempts: His Sovereign Tranquillity

Job 35. 6, 7, 8.

1 Tim. 6. 3.

quillity is ſo ſublimely plac'd, that 'tis above the reach of all Diſquieting Impreſſions: and, like the Stars, that feel not the Diſeaſes their inauſpicious Influence produces, He doth not reſent the torments he Inflicts. God's Juſtice is not leſs Eſſential to him than his Mercy; Witneſs that (the numbers of the Saints and the Reprobate conſider'd) thouſands fall Sacrifices to the ſeverer Attribute, for one that proves Capable of the milder. He ſaid, *He would get himſelf honour upon* Pharoh *and all his Hoſt*, when he deſign'd their own ruine in the *Red Sea*: And *Moſes* ſaid, *He hath triumphed glorioufly* in effecting it. And in *Ezekiel* he ſays, *Behold, I am againſt thee, O* Sidon, *and I will be glorify'd in the midſt of thee, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſhall have executed my judgments in her, and ſhall be ſanctify'd in her.* Thus, when a flaſh of God's Indignation (kindled by that *ſtrange fire* they preſum'd to offer before him) had blaſted the two preſumptuous Sons of *Aaron*, God is ſaid *to have been ſanctify'd in them that come nigh him, and to have been glorify'd before all the people*; ſuch eminent and exemplary Inſtances of Severity, manifeſting him to be ſo Holy in his Laws, and ſo Concern'd for them, that even the

Exod. 14. 17, 18.

Exod. 15. 1.

Ezek. 28. 22.

Lev. 10. 3.

Miniſters of his Altars ſhall not violate them with impunity, but find Him (what the Writer to the *Hebrews* calls him) *A conſuming fire*; Who will be Gloriſi'd before all his people, either by the Obedience of thoſe that approach him, or by their Deſtruction. So to Evidence, that God can derive Satisfaction as well from the Exerciſe of provoked Juſtice, as from that of his provoked Mercy; the ſacred Orator uſes this remarkable *Antanaclaſis*: *And it ſhall come to paſs, that as the Lord rejoyced over you to do you good, and multiply you: ſo will the Lord rejoyce over you to deſtroy you, and bring you to nought.* Thus, thô it be truly ſaid of God by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*: (And therefore the determined Conſumption of the whole Land, which our Bibles Engliſh, *God's work*: *his ſtrange work*, other Tranſlators read, *Opus alienum ſuum*) Yet when the ſins of incorrigible offenders are grown to that provoking Heighth, that his Mercy intercedes no more to avert or ſuſpend the inflictions of his Juſtice; than how much he can ſatisfie himſelf in Deſtroying thoſe that would not be Preſerved, may be gheſs'd at by that formidable Expreſſion in *Ezekiel*; where, having fore-told what havock

Heb 12. 24.

Deut. 18. 63.

Lam. 3. 25.

Iſai. 28. 21.

havock the Sword, the Famine, and the Peſtilence ſhould make amongſt the intractable and diſpers'd *Iſraelites*, he adds, (as a kind of Ἐπιλογον) *Thus ſhall mine anger be accompliſhed, and I will cauſe my fury to reſt upon them, and I will be comforted.* Ezek. 13. 5. The Howlings of the Damned as well ſound forth his Praiſes, as do the Hallelujahs of the Saints; they both do ſing to him an everlaſting Canticle of Praiſe; only in this great Conſort of his whole intelligent Creation, the deſigneleſly conſpiring Voices are as differing as the Conditions of the reſpective Singers. Hell's darkneſs doth as well contribute to God's Glory, as Heaven's Eternal Splendor: As ſhadows judiciouſly plac'd, do no leſs praiſe the Painter, than do the livelier and brighter Colours. And as when the Earth doth ſend black, noiſome, and ſulphureous Exhalations up toward the Sky, alaſs, they reach not Heaven, nor diſcompoſe the Spheres; but all the Storms and Thunders they produce fall on that Globe they came from, and there do all their miſchief: So, the wicked may wrong God indeed, yet do they really harm but themſelves by all their greateſt Sins, which trouble Him chiefly' but becauſe they neceſſitate him to puniſh them: for the Tranſgreſſions that do

moſt

most Provoke God do him not the least Harm. An impious person may (as *Elihu* lately inform'd us) hurt a Man as himself is, not that Supremely Blessed Deity; the Result of whose Infinite Perfections is a resembling Happiness, which is as inseparable from Him as his Essence. Our Offences may derogate from his Accessional Glory, not from his Essential Felicity; or rather, the most desperate Sinners by their greatest Crimes, can but change the Attribute they should bring Honour to, and but oppose the Glorifying of his Goodness to occasion the Glorifying of his Justice; since he will be infallibly Glorify'd soon or late, either by Mens Actions, or their Sufferings; by their Practice of Duties, or Punishment for Sin. Thus you see how little God is beholden to you for your declining Hell: Nor will the score be very much increas'd by your Addresses and Attempts for Heaven. *Can a Man* (says *Eliphas*) *be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain unto him that thou makest thy ways perfect?* Congruously to which sence the Psalmist says, *My Goodness extendeth not to Thee*; The fire that we kindle on God's Altars, heats and enlightens us, but warms not

Job 22. 2, 3

Psal. 16. 2.

not Heaven at ſo diſtant a remove, nor is wanted in the Sun's Reſidence. We have all the Redolence of the Perfumes and Incenſe we burn upon his Altars, the Smoak doth vaniſh e're it can reach the Sky, and whilſt 'tis undiſpers'd, but Clouds, and but obſcures it. Alaſs, our beſt performances are as uſeleſs Services to God as the Heir's bringing Wax to his departing Father, is to him, which adds not any thing to the Rich Man's Store, and is by him deſir'd and accepted, only to Seal away a Fortune to his Son. Thô therefore it be true, that God is pleas'd with our performances, yet is that Welcome he vouchſafes to give them, ſo far from enabling us by them to requite his Love, that it increaſes the unrepuitedneſs of it; ſince he is delighted with them as they afford him juſt riſes to reward them. How far from Mercenary is then God's Bounty! ſince he accepts our acknowledgments of his former Bleſſings, (chiefly) to make them opportunities of conferring freſh ones; as good old *Iſaac* deſir'd his Son's Veniſon, that from the reliſhing of that ſavory Meat he might take an opportunity to Bleſs him. Gen. 27. 4.

And the better to diſcover how diſintereſs'd God's Favours are, let us further conſider, how little they are requitable;

for

for we can give him nothing but his own, (nor, Heaven knows, all that neither;) and both the Will and Power to ſerve him are His, upon ſo juſt and many ſcores, that we are unable to Retribute, unleſs we do reſtore; and all the Duties we can pay our Maker, are leſs properly Requitals than Reſtitutions. When *David* and his Officers had offer'd towards the Structure of that Magnificent Temple, which they ſeem'd ambitious to make a Manſion inferior to Heaven only; The King himſelf gave Three thouſand Talents of Gold, and ſeven of refin'd Silver, and the heads of the People, Five thouſand Talents (beſides Ten thouſand Drachms) of Gold, Ten thouſand Talents of Silver, Eighteen thouſand of Braſs, and an Hundred thouſand of Iron, a Treaſure, of which I ſcarce remember to have read the like in any Hiſtory) beſides a number of all manner of precious ſtones, capable of impoveriſhing the very *Indies*: they perfum'd this noble and unequall'd Offering with a ſolemn Confeſſion, which perhaps in God's eſteem was much more precious than it: *Thine O Lord,* (ſays the Royal Prophet in the name of all) *is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty; for all that is in Heaven and Earth is thine,*

1 Chron. 29. 11. 16.

thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all. And in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy glorious Name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are ſtrangers before thee, and ſojourners, as were all our Fathers. Our days on Earth are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this ſtore that we have prepared to build thee an Houſe for thy Holy Name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. Who, (ſays the Apoſtle) in a Queſtion that imports its own Negative) *hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompens'd to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.* Nay, even our Love it ſelf (that poor Man's Surety and Exchequer, that doth pay all his Debts by ſupplying him with the prerogative to Coin his deſires and wiſhes of an arbitrary value) is here unable to diſcharge our Debts, our Love being too much the effect, to be capable of being the recompence of God's. And ſurely, the Divine Amoriſt

Rom. 11. 35, 36.

1 Joh. 4. 10. Amoriſt had cauſe to ſay, that *herein is the love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* And as the ſame Apoſtle elſewhere 1 Joh. 4. 19. ſpeaks, *we love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* If, in effect, we look upon the unworthy conteſt, betwixt God's Mercies, and moſt Mens Ingratitude, and but reflect upon the ſmall return of Love that the greateſt diſburſements of His do uſually bring home; we cannot but acknowledge, (as *David* in the lately mention'd Scripture did) that our loving God for his Favour, is one of the greateſt Favours that we love him for. So unrequitable is God's Love, and ſo inſolvent are we, that that Love vaſtly improves the benefit, by which alone we might have pretended to ſome ability of Retribution. And ſo unlimited is this impotence of ours to recompence or repay God's dilection, that it extends to, and fetters our very wiſhes. For God enjoys an affluence of Felicity, ſo perfect and entire, that even our wiſhes can aim at nothing for him worthy of him, unleſs inſtructed by what he already actually poſſeſſes; and the Senſe of this ſame very Impotence, to ſome of the greateſt proficients in *Seraphick Love*, appears not the leaſt uneaſie property of it. It grieves us ſenſibly, to ſee our ſelves reduc'd to be only

only Paſſive, and the Receivers in this Commerce. We would fain contribute ſomething, and cannot always refrain from devoting our Wiſhes to encreaſe his Happineſs, to whom we owe all ours. And ſome holy Perſons (particularly St. *Auſtin*) have, by the Exuberance of their Gratitude and Devotion, been tranſported to make Wiſhes, and uſe Expreſſions, wherein their affections had a greater ſhare than their Reaſon, and which argued them much better to apprehend, How much God deſerv'd of them, than How little he needed them. But, upon ſecond Thoughts, we ſhall find, that the Cauſe of our Grief ought to turn it into our Joy, ſince the Deſires we would frame, aiming at God's being infinitely happy, are all Fulfilled before they are conceived, and that in the moſt Advantageous and Nobleſt way: For, could God's happineſs admit Acceſſion by our accompliſh'd Wiſhes, there were then a poſſibility of his Wanting ſomething to render it Compleat. And ſure, 'tis a more Supreme Felicity to be by Nature tranſcendently above All encreaſe of Bleſſedneſs, than to receive the Greateſt that Men can Wiſh.

To proceed now to the Conſtancy of God's Love: We cannot entertain of God any *Sect.* 16.

any Apprehenſions, not altogether Unworthy of him, and criminally Injurious to him, without believing, That to think that he can be inconſtant, is as great a Crime as 'twere a Miſery to find him ſo. His Love is like his Eſſence, immutably Eternal, reaching from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, it preceded the Nativity of Time, and will ſurvive its utmoſt Period, and Obſequies.

Joh. 1. 13. *having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* ſays the Evangeliſt: And when St. *James* had told us, That

Jam. 1. 17. *every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights,* he adds, (to compleat our Conſolation) *with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning. Of his own Will begat he us of the word of truth.* And, in Effect, ſince God takes the Motives of his Love to us, from Himſelf, not from Us, the Unchangeableneſs his Nature ſeems ſtrongly to infer that of his Charity, and our Happineſs in it. For

Mal. 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye Sons of* Jacob *are not conſumed,* ſays God by the laſt of his Prophets: And in *Jeremiah* he tells his people, *I have lov'd thee with an everlaſting love.* And what God once ſaid to the generous *Joſuah, I will never leave*

Joſh. 1. 5. *thee nor forſake thee,* is by the Writer to the

the *Hebrews* apply'd to Believers in general: Heb. 13. 5. for *the gifts and calling of God* (ſays the ſame Author elſewhere) *are without repentance.* Rom. 11. 29. Not do thoſe Croſſes that ſeem due to his Anger deſtroy the Immutability of his Love, ſince even that Anger is an Effect of it, proceeding from a Fatherly Impatience of ſeeing a Spot unwip'd off in the Face he loves too well to ſee a Blemiſh in it; and from his Deſire to ſee his Child an Object fit for a larger Meaſure of his kindneſs: As when we beat the Duſt out of a Suit we fancy, we ſtrike not out of Anger, but only to remove that which doth Sully it, and hinder us to take that Delight in it, which our fondneſs would be pleaſed with a juſt Cauſe to find. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten,* (ſays our Saviour.) And, *I know, O Lord,* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.* The Furnace of Affliction being meant but to Refine us from our Earthly droſſineſs, and Soften us for the Impreſſion of God's own Stamp and Image. The great and merciful Architect of his Church, (whom not only the Philoſophers have ſtyl'd, but the Scripture it ſelf calls τεχνίτης, an Artiſt or Artificer) employs not on us the Hammer and the Rev. 3. 10. Pſal. 119. 75. Heb. 11. 10.

Chizel, with an intent to Wound or Mangle us, but only to Square and Fashion our hard and stubborn Hearts into such
1 Pet. 2. 5. *living Stones*, as may both Grace and Strengthen his heavenly Structure. Nor is God only thus Constant to his Love, but to his Lovelineſs. Our Female Beauties are usually as fickle in their Faces as their Minds, and more certainly in the Former; because, though Casualties should spare them, Age brings in a necessity of a Change, nay, a Decay; leaving our Doaters upon Red and White incessantly perplex'd, by the incertainty both of the Continuance of their Mistress's Kindness, and of the Lasting of her Beauty, (both which are necessary to the *Amorist*'s Joys and Quiet:) for, sometimes, when the Mistress's humour doth not change so much, as to prove guilty of the fault of Inconstancy, her Face alters enough to make her Lovers wish Inconstancy no Fault; or, that she had committed it, that her Fickleness might afford them the Excuse of Imitation or Revenge: But, in Devotion, we are equally secure from both these Dangers; Since God doth not desist from blessing us with His Love, nor ceases ever from deserving the Heighth of Ours. Nor is he only constant in making us the Objects

jects of his Love, but alſo in bending and enclining us to make him the object of our ſtrongeſt Affections; ſo that he not only perſiſts in continuing to us both the offer and the value of his Love, but perſeveres to give us a receptive diſpoſition to welcome it to us, and reflect it up to Him. The want of ſuch a diſpoſition loſt *Adam* Paradiſe, and the fall'n Angels Heaven; there being to the object, that muſt ſecure our Love, ſuch a Nature requiſite in reference to our affections, as Philoſophers are pleas'd to aſcribe to the World's Centre in relation to heavy Bodies; which, they teach us, that Magnetick Point has the double Faculty, not only to draw thither, but to keep there. For ſo Untoward and Croſs-grain'd are We, in point of our own Good, and ſo unfit to procure, and ready to deſert, our own Felicity, that neither its Excellency is a ſufficient Motive to carry our addreſſes to it, or its poſſeſſion a competent tye to intercept in us all deſigns of Revolts and Divorces: but we muſt be uſed as peeviſh Children are, who, (on the one ſide) when their Mouths are out of taſte, and they refuſe to take what is neceſſary for them, muſt have it not only offer'd them, but forc'd upon them, and be (as it were)

made to receive it; and who on the other ſide) muſt be reſtrain'd from Gadding, when the beauty of the Manſions they live in cannot invite their ſtay; but they would gladly leave the proudeſt Palaces Architecture can boaſt, to run into the ſtreet and dabble in the Kennel. All theſe three properties of Divine Conſtancy are not ill ſhadow'd in the operations of the Load-ſtone, (a Mineral, in which I have made too many Experiments not to be by you allow'd to make ſome compariſons to it:) For, firſt, it never forſakes its Inclinations for the Steel: next, being united to it, it retains ſo conſtantly its attractive Qualities, that it gives not the Needle any Motive of deſerting it; and Thirdly, it doth never rightly touch the amorous Steel without leaving an Impreſſion, which ever after diſpoſes it to a Converſion to that Magnetick Poſture, which beſt fits it to receive freſh Influences. To which let me add this other Reſemblance, betwixt God's Work on Us, and the Load-ſtones on the Iron, that the kind Stone attracts a Needle to it, not to advantage it ſelf by that Union, but to impart its virtue to what it draws. Beſides, Abſence and Rivals, thoſe frequent Ruiners of other Lovers happineſs, can threaten

threaten nothing of formidable to yours. For, abſence (which ſo divorces us from that which animates us that Lovers do not ſo improperly ſtile it Death, if Death be but the Separation of Soul and Body) by God's Ubiquity we are ſecured from; He is ever preſent with us, or rather in us. You that not long ſince ſo highly valu'd the opportunities of converſing with your Miſtriſs for ſome few moments, ſhall here find your priviledges improv'd to a permiſſion, nay, an Invitation, of entertaining the Object of your Love at all times: No hour renders your viſits unſeaſonable, nor no length tedious: He is rather welcom'ſt to God that comes to him oftneſt, add ſtays with him longeſt. What Favours were vouchſaf'd to that ancient Propheteſs, (who was likewiſe one of the firſt Evangeliſts) who for many years *departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with Faſtings and Prayers night and day*, the beginning of St. *Luke*'s Goſpel may inform you: The *midnight Hymns* of *Paul* and *Silas* did not only not diſturb or offend him they prais'd, but procur'd the viſit of an Angel to bring them miraculous and unexpected liberty, as a proof of the acceptableneſs of their ſeeming unſeaſonable Devotions. When

Luk. 2. 39, &c.

Act. 6. 25, 25, &c.

Gen. 5. 22. 23. 24. *Enoch had walked with God* as many years as the year has days, God was ſo far from being importun'd or tir'd by that laſting aſſiduity, that vouchſafing him an unexampled exemption from death, he was pleas'd by a new and nearer Cut to Heaven, to admit him to a yet cloſer, more immediate, and more undiſtracted Communion with himſelf. And when *Moſes* had ſpent no leſs than Exod. 34. 30. *forty days, and forty nights* in converſing (if I may uſe ſo familiar a Term) with God in the Mount, he brought down thence, inſtead of a Penance for his importunity, ſo ſignal and radiant a Teſtimony of God's peculiar Favour, that his dazled Country-men were as much diſabled, as invited, to gaze on an object of ſo much wonder. And then, how proud do we ſee many Lovers of their ſufferings, when ſhe but knows of them for whom they are endur'd? But in *Seraphick Love*, there is not the leaſt good wiſh, or privateſt ſuffering, nay, not a whiſpering Sigh, or cloſer Thought, that ſilently Groans or Aſpires in the Amorous Soul, but he both ſees and hears, Pſal. 56. 8 that puts his Servants *tears into his Bottle*, Sweetning and Recompencing the greateſt misfortunes that his Love occaſions, with ſuch ſupport and joys, as hinder us to feel them,

them, and make them deſerve a contrary name. Each amorous Soul may ſay to God with *David*, *Thou knoweſt my down-ſitting, and my uprifing, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off, thou compaſſeſt my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.* And Chriſt alſo himſelf has ſo attentive an Eye upon the amorous Soul, that he is held forth in the *Apocalypſe*, as telling the Ruler of the Church of *Smyrna*, *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty*; And ſaying to the Angel of the Church of *Pergamus*, *I know thy works, and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satan's ſeat is, and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith, even in thoſe days wherein* Antipas *was my faithful Martyr, who was ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth.* So that no endearing Circumſtance of our Love ſcapes unobſerv'd by Him, who has Done and Suffer'd ſo much to engage us to it. God remembers not our Endeavours to ſerve Him the leſs, for Our having forgotten them. *When ſaw we thee any way aïſtreſſed, and relieved thee?* will be the Queſtion of thoſe to whom Heaven it ſelf will be at the laſt Day awarded, as having Miniſtred to their Redeemer. Thoſe, that in Degenerate times, ſuch as ours, *Lindamor*, did, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, mourn for

Pſal. 139. 2, 3.

Rev. 2. 8, 9.

Ver. 12, 13.

Matth. 25. 37. &c.

Their Sins, that mourned not for their Own, and condol'd among themſelves the ſpreading Wickedneſs of the times they liv'd in; though probably the Dangers threatned them by the very Sinfulneſs they deplor'd, made them affect ſuch Privacies in their Conferences, as freed them from the thoughts of being Over-heard; yet the Scripture informs us (and 'tis a Comfortable as well as Memorable Paſſage) that

Mal. 3. 16, 17. *the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a Book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name, Then ſhall he return, and diſcern betwixt the righteous and the wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not. I*

Rev. 2. 9, 10. *know*, ſays Chriſt, (not only to the Angel of *Smyrna*, but to each true Sufferer for him) *thy works, and tribulation, and poverty: Fear none of theſe things that thou ſhalt ſuffer. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* God is often pleas'd to accept thoſe good Thoughts and Intentions of his Servants, which never arrive at actual Performances, though *David* built not the Temple he deſign'd, yet his Son, that did it, informs us, that God ſaid unto him,

2 Chron. 6. 8. *Foraſmuch as it was in thine heart to build an Houſe for my Name, Thou didſt well in that*

it

it was in thine heart, &c. And 'tis the Epithet our Saviour gives God, *Your Father which seeth in ſecret, &c.* Nor need we fear our Rivals ſhould ſupplant us, ſince we can have none in Devotion, whoſe Prayer and endeavour is it not, that God would love us more. For his Love to you being (as the chiefeſt merit) the ſtrongeſt Motive and Title unto theirs, they cannot but wiſh him well whom God doth love ſo; and cannot wiſh him better, than by imploring for him freſh Additions, both of that Love of God, and grateful diſpoſitions to return it. Our Saviour aſſures us, that *there is Joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* And the ſole Hymn (except a Viſionary one) I find recorded of the Celeſtial Quire, was ſung for a Bleſſing to Mankind, wherein (for ought I know) their Love and Sympathy alone concern'd them: *For unto us* (Men) *the Child is born, and unto us the Son is given. Who took not upon him the nature of Angels, but the ſeed of Abraham.* So Noble and ſo diſintereſs'd doth Divine Love make Ours, that there is nothing, beſides the Object of that Love, that we love more than our Concurrents in it, perchance out of a Gratitude to their aſſiſting us, to pay a Debt (of Love and Praiſe) for

Mat. 6. 6.

Luk. 15. 7. 10.

Luk. 2. 13, 14.

Iſa. 9. 6.

Heb. 2. 16.

for which (alaſs!) we find our ſingle ſelves but too Inſolvent.

Sect. 17. Perhaps I need not mind you, *Lindamor*, that divers paſſages of the fore-going Diſcourſe, ſuppoſe the Truth of their Doctrine, who aſcribe to God, in relation to every Man, an Eternal, Unchangeable and Inconditionate Decree of Election, or Reprobation. Yet concerning the Controverſies betwixt the *Calviniſts* and the *Remonſtrants* about Prædeſtination, and the coherent Doctrines, it were improper to give you here my ſence. Thoſe that are truly Pious of either Party, are, perhaps, otherwiſe look'd on by God than by one another, as contending, which of God's Attributes ſhould be moſt reſpected; the one ſeeming to affirm irreſpective Decrees, to magnifie his Goodneſs; and the other to deny them, but to ſecure the credit of his Juſtice. And even in Honouring the ſame Attribute, his Goodneſs, theſe Adverſaries ſeem Rivals, the one party ſuppoſing it beſt celebrated by believing it ſo irreſiſtible, that to whom ſoever 'tis intended, he cannot but be happy; and th'other thinking it moſt extoll'd by being believ'd ſo Univerſal, that it will make every Man happy, if he pleaſes: The one Party electing to Honour Free-grace, by aſſigning

assigning it (as to Men) an unlimitedly vast extent; as the other does, by ascribing it an infallibly victorious degree. But though my haste, and the nature of my Theme make me decline the Controversies about Prædestination, yet since the Doctrine that maintains it, is not only by almost all the rest of Mankind, but by the rest of the Protestant Churches themselves, (the *Lutherans*, and divers Learn'd Divines of the Church of *England*) not only rejected, but detested as little less than Blasphemous, (as indeed they that judge it an error, cannot but be tempted to think it a dangerous one, and of very pernicious consequence, so far forth as its Sequels are permitted to have influence on Mens Practice) I think it not amiss to Advertise you, that the Doctrine of Prædestination is not necessary to justify the Freeness and the Greatness of God's Love. For so conspicuous and refulgent a Truth is that of God's being the Author of Man's Felicity, that the dispute betwixt the *Calvinists* and *Arminians* is not so much concerning the Thing, as concerning the manner of its being proffer'd; the former affirming Grace to be irresistibly presented; the latter, though they deny it to be irrejectable, yet granting, not only that it is altoge-

altogether free and undeserv'd, but also, that the proffer is made both with a Power enabling those to whom 'tis tender'd, to accept it, and with such engaging invitations, that man at his First Conversion need contribute nothing to his Felicity, but the not-wilfully refusing it, and may more properly be said to owe it unto God, than the Beggar to owe his Alms to his Reliever, though he open his hand to receive it, which he might have declin'd to do, if he would have wilfully courted his own prejudice. Christ paid *a Ransom to Redeem us*, 'tis true, and he is therefore call'd *The Lord that bought us*: but it was God's free Goodness, both to provide us That Christ, and to accept of That Ransom, neither of which he was oblig'd to do, and therefore the Scripture ascribes it not to the Justice, but to the Love of God to the World, that *He sent his only begotten Son to redeem it*: and S. *Paul* in the same Text tells us both, that *We are justify'd, δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι freely by his Grace*, and yet that it is, *διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως through the Redemption*, (purchas'd for a Ransom; the Original Word English'd Redemption, relating to the price paid for the Redeeming of Captives) *that is in Jesus Christ*. 'Tis confest on all hands, that Merit must be

2 Pet. 2. 1.

Joh. 3. 16.

Rom. 3. 24.

be diſclaim'd, and thoſe that ſeem to expect ſomething from God as a due, acknowledge, that if his promiſe did not, their actions could not make it ſo; and that 'tis to his Mercy they owe the Right they have to confide in his Juſtice. S. *Paul*, who having *fought the good Fight, finiſh'd his courſe, and kept the Faith*, expected a *Crown of Righteouſneſs from the Lord*, under the Notion of the Righteous *Judge*; yet tells us, *that by Grace we are ſaved, through faith, and that not of our ſelves, it is the gift of God.* Whoſe Promiſes now they are made us, allow us indeed to expect Heaven from his Juſtice; but *the making us thoſe great and precious promiſes*, (as St. *Peter* juſtly ſtiles them) muſt be acknowledged the pure effect of *his free and undeſerved Goodneſs*; which to believe Infinite, we need but conſider the diſproportion betwixt ſuch a Recompence as Eternal Glory, and the leaſt imperfect performances of ours; which though they needed not pardon, could not at leaſt challenge any reward from him, who as our Creator, has ſuch a Right to exact of us what ſervices he pleaſes, without propoſing us any Recompence, that our exacteſt obedience to all his Commands, would yet leave us to confeſs our ſelves

2 Tim. 4. v. 7, 8.

Eph. 2. 8.

2 Pet. 1. 4.

unprofitable

Luk. 17. 10. *unprofitable ſervants who have done but what it was our Duty to do*; and what if we had not done, we had given God, who had the Power, the Right, and Provocation to puniſh us. And indeed, ſo conſcious are men generally (if not naturally) to their being beholding to God for their Felicity, that even thoſe that miſtake or oppoſe his way of doing them good, will yet be ſure to find out ſome Notion or other, under which they may conceive themſelves God's Debtors for his Bleſſings. That the more ſober ſort of Romiſh Catholicks themſelves, aſcribe not ſo much to Merit, (properly ſo call'd) nor ſo little to God's Grace, as the more Quarrelſome Writers of their Party had given the more eager Diſputants of ours occaſion to reproach them, were perhaps no difficult task to manifeſt, if my haſte would give me leave. That the *Arminians* own the freeneſs and unmeritedneſs of God's Grace, the Remonſtrance * Confeſſion and Apology are very careful to ſatisfie the World. And even the *Socinians*, (how proſperouſly I determin not) are not a little, or uninduſtriouſly ſollicitous to free their erroneous Doctrine of Juſtification from the objected guilt of its tendency to draw the Imbracers of it to *Sacrifice to their*

* *Eſpecially* Chap. 17. Numb. 5. 6.

their own Nets, and thank themſelves for Hab. 1. 16
their Felicity, which brings into my mind a paſſage that I lately read in one of the chief modern Upholders of that Sect, *Schlichtingius*; who is wont, in my opinion, where his Subject will bear it, to diſcourſe as Fairly and as Rationally as almoſt any Writer that I have met with of his Perſuaſion; and who labours to reconcile *Socinus* his Doctrine with the Freeneſs of God's Grace, by Conſiderations, which, not to Injure him, I ſhall preſent you with in his own words.—— *Ad retundendam vero* (ſays he, diſputing againſt the Learned *Meiſnerus*) *arrogantiam juſtificatorum, & ne dicant ſe meruiſſe Gratiam, non eſt neceſſe, ſervum in homine arbitrium inducere; non debet virtus tolli ut tollatur arrogantia. Sufficit, 1. Quod nec velle nec perficere poſſint, niſi Deus & voluntatem excitet & vires augeat. 2. Quod ea, quæ divi-* pag. 97.
nis adjuti viribus faciunt, nullo modo dignitati & pretio divinæ gratiæ reſpondent, ſed infinito intervallo ab ea abſint. Nay, though the Modern and Degenerate Jews be, upon the Score of being the great Patrons of Man's Free will, not cauſleſly eſteem'd the great Oppugners of God's Free grace; yet both from their Famous Rabbi, and my Learned Acquaintance, *Menaſſeh Ben Iſreal*

Iſrael, and from divers others of their moſt eminent Writers, has the truth ſometimes extorted Confeſſions, which, though made upon Erroneous grounds were not very far ſhort of Orthodox. To which purpoſe I remember, that a Jewiſh Profeſſor of Hebrew, (who aſſiſted me in my Studies of that myſterious Tongue) being, as the reſt of his Nation, an eager and peremptory Champion of Free will, conceiv'd, that even that Liberty, which to us ſeems leaſt to Indebt men to their Creator, did tranſcendently Oblige him unto God. For, one Day that we were privately and freely diſcourſing together of matters of Religion, he told me, he thought Men ow'd more to God's Goodneſs, than the very angels do. For, ſaid he, whereas God, without any good Work of theirs, but purely out of his Goodneſs, conferr'd on them that bleſt Condition they enjoy; by giving Man a Free-will, by the good Uſe of which he may Glorifie his Maker; when, by abuſing it, 'tis in his power to Diſhonour him, he allows Man that higheſt Satisfaction and Priviledge, of Co-operating to his own Felicity.

Sect. 18. And now, *Lindamor*, we are arrived at the laſt Property, which qualifies God, the fitteſt Object for our Love, which is, the

the *Advantageouſneſs* of his to us both in the preſent and the future Life. And Firſt, even in this World we owe God no leſs than all the Goods we poſſeſs. We owe him both what we have, and that we are: For we may ſay truly of God with the Pſalmiſt, *It is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves.* Pſal. 100. verſ. 3. And we were not only in his hands, ſo like *Clay in the Potter's*, that he might have made us any thing; but we were ſo purely that Negative, from whence we were extracted, that He (if he had pleaſed) for ever might have left us to our firſt nothing. His Love is the firſt Original and Fountain-bleſſing; all the reſt are but as Pipes (and Inſtruments) to convey, and ſerve but to hand it to us. Your Wit wins you applauſe, Your Induſtry heaps you up Treaſures; be it granted. But who gave you that Wit? and did both Give and Proſper that boaſted Induſtry? Certainly, God as much gives all the Goods we poſſeſs, as he that gives a Begger a thouſand pounds, gives him the Cloaths, and Meat, and all the bravery it helps him to. But beſides theſe more obvious Preſents of God's Bounty, we enjoy other effects of his Goodneſs, which, though by the Cuſtomarineſs of Iſa. 64. 8.

their being poſſeſſed, they prove leſs Conſpicuous than other, yet grow no leſs priz'd, when the want or loſs of them make us ſenſible of the true value of them. Had I the leiſure, *Lindamor*, to lead your thoughts with me to the Gallies, and ſhew you there thoſe wretched Captives, that are chain'd to the Oars they tug at, and though expos'd to all the Miſeries and Hardſhips of a tempeſtuous Sea, have oftentimes cauſe given them, by their barbarous uſage aſhore, to fear the Ocean leſs than any Port, ſave Death. Could I draw from you the Curtains of ſick and dying Men, and open to you that ſad Scene, where ſome pine and languiſh away by diſtempers, that deprive them of all Joyes, Advantages, and (what is more conſiderable) Uſes of Life, before they eaſe them of Life it ſelf; Others Breath rather than live, perpetually tormented either with their Diſeaſes or Phyſick to protract a wretched life, upon terms that turn it into a trouble: And others ſtrugling with the rude pangs of death, are yet perchance leſs tormented by them, than by the ſad proſpect of their former life and the remembrance of thoſe criminal pleaſures, *which yet it perhaps leſs troubles them*

them that they muſt now forego, than that they once enjoy'd them. Should I, *Lindamor*, bring you into Hoſpitals, and ſhew you there the various ſhapes of Humane Miſery, and how many Souls, narrowly lodg'd, (if I may ſo ſpeak) in Synecdochical Bodies, ſee their earthen Cottages moulder away to Duſt; thoſe miſerable perſons by the loſs of one limb after another, ſurviving but part of themſelves, and living to ſee themſelves dead and buried by piece-meal Should I, to diſpatch, *Lindamor*, ſhew you all the ſeveral Companies of Mourners, that almoſt make up Mankind, and diſcloſe to you how copious ſhowers of Tears do almoſt every where water (not to ſay overflow) this vale of Miſeries; you would perchance ſee cauſe to think, that God's privative (if I may ſo ſpeak) may contend with his poſitive Favours; and that you owe little leſs for what you are not, than for what you are, to that diſcriminating Mercy of his, to which alone you owe your exemption from Miſeries, as great as the Bleſſing it confers on you: For, *Who maketh thee to differ?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. is a queſtion that may be as well askt in reference to our External, as to our Spiritual condition. Which in-

vites me to mind you, *Lindamor*, that you are yet more engag'd to God's love for protecting you from thoſe groſs Vices that disfigure moſt Mens minds, than from thoſe leſs dangerous, though more reſented diſeaſes that diſtemper their bodies.

For, *Ambition*, *Luſt*, *Avarice*, *Revenge*, and even that *vain Converſation* which young Gentlmen are generally pleas'd to think ſo innocent, are really more formidable and pernicious Diſeaſes and Calamities, than thoſe that reduce men to take Phyſick, or thruſt them into Hoſpitals. To evince the truth of which Paradox, I hope I ſhall not need to mind you of judging of the dangerouſneſs of Diſeaſes by the Nobleneſs of that part affected, ſince I can tell you, that he that cannot err, ſeems daily to juſtifie our Aſſertion, by inflicting ſickneſs and the ſharpeſt outward Calamities on his own deareſt Children, to preſerve them from the contagion of Sin, or cure them of the unfilial Habitudes of it. And therefore, ſince, when we ſee a tender Mother apply a painfull Cauſtick to the neck of her Favourite-Infant, threatned by the Appolexy, we ſcruple not to conclude, that ſhe thinks the trouble of an Iſſue, an Evil inferior to the Convulſion

ſion Fit, So when we ſee our Heavenly Father ſend Infirmities and Croſſes to reſcue thoſe he loves, from the Contagion or Dominion of Sin; we may ſafely conclude he thinks affliction a leſs evil than Guilt, ſince he is too Wiſe and Indulgent a Phyſitian to Cure with a Remedy worſe than the Diſeaſe. In the eighth of *Deuteronomy*, there is a caution given the *Iſraelites*, leſt Proſperity (which is wont to be a kind of *Lethe*, that Makes Men forget all but their Enjoyments) ſhould make any of them ſay in his Heart, *My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.* Deut. 8. 17. 18. *But* (ſaith my Text) *they ſhall remember the Lord their God: for he it is that giveth them Power to get wealth.* It is not the revolting *Iſraelites* only, of whoſe Ignorance of his Bounty God may complain, as he did by the Prophet, by whom he ſaid, *I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their Arms, but they knew not that I healed them*: Hoſ. 11. 3. And there are but too many of whom he might ſay, as he did by the ſame Prophet; *For ſhe did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine,* Hoſ. 1. 8. 9. *and Oil, and multiply'd her Silver and her Gold, which they prepar'd for Baal- Therefore will I return and take away my Corn*

in the time thereof, and my Wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will recover my Wooll and my Flax given to cover her nakedneſs. And this will make way for the Deſign I had to recommend the advantageouſneſs of God's Love by ſaying, That as for Spiritual Goods, he gives us in this Life ſo rich an earneſt of expected Joys, that even the earneſt is a ſtock large enough to ſubſiſt with Comfort on, and really out-values and tranſcends all thoſe momentary pleaſures, it requires us to forſake, to keep up a Title to Eternal Ones. But to particularize God's Mercies to us in this very life, would certainly take up a conſiderable part of it, And yet the Love God bears us dies not with us, nor doth (as Mens Affections) either endure a Funeral in our Tombs, or ſurvive only in a uſeleſs grief, (or an eſteem as bootleſs.) No, God's love is ſo far from reſembling the uſual ſort of Friends, who, when they have accompanied us to the Grave, do there leave us; that, like the Angels that *carried Lazarus's Soul to Abraham's boſom*, its Officiouſneſs begins then moſt to appear, when our dark Eyes are clos'd, and is then trueſt to the beloved Soul, when ſhe forſakes the Body; given each Bleſſed

Luk. 16. 22.

ſed Saint cauſe to ſay of God, what *Naomi* did of *Boaz*, that *He hath not left off his kindneſs to the living, and to the dead.* Now, indeed (ſays our Saviour's Favorite) *are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: But we know, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him.* This Bleſt expectance muſt be now my Theme, becauſe the narrow Limits, which my Deſign hath plac'd to this Diſcourſe (of the Advantages accruing from God's Love) will leave no more room untaken up by Heaven. Ruth. 2. 20 1 Joh. 3. 1

But, *Lindamor*, before I proceed to ſet forth to you the Greatneſs of the Felicity reſerv'd for us in Heaven, it will, I fear, be requiſite to mind you of the lawfulneſs of having an eye to it. For many, not undeſervedly, applauded Preachers, have of late been pleas'd to teach the People, that to hope for Heaven is a Mercenary, Legal, and therefore unfilial Affection. Indeed, to hope for Heaven as Wages for Work perform'd, or by way of Merit, in the proper and ſtrick Acceptation of that term, were a preſumption, to which none of the Divines, we diſſent from, can be too much an Enemy, nor perhaps more ſo than I am. But to take in God's Bleſſing among Sect. 19.

the Motives of Loving God, is, but to do as he did, who ſaid, *I love the Lord* Pſ. 116. 1. *becauſe he hath heard my voice and my ſupplications*; and to look upon the joys of Heaven, to comfort and ſupport us in the hardſhips and loſſes to be undergone in our journey thitherward is, to imitate no worſe a Man than *Moſes*, of whom it is ſaid, that Heb. 26. 11. *he eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the Treaſures in Ægypt; for he had reſpect*, or turned his Eye, (απεβλεπε) *unto the recompence of the reward.* It is indeed, *Lindamor*, a happy Frame of Mind, to be able to love God purely for himſelf, without any Glance at our own Advantages. But though I dare not deny, that it is poſſible to attain to ſo high and diſintereſs'd a kind of Love, yet I think that that Excellency, ſuppos'd to be vouchſaf'd to ſome Men, is not by the Scripture exacted as a Duty from all Men. Were all the Recompence of Piety of a worldly Nature, and to be here receiv'd, the Actions invited to, by the Intuition of it, might paſs for Mercenary. But when Heaven is chiefly hoped for, as it will admit us unto the fruition of God himſelf in Chriſt. and that the other Joys expected there, are ſo far from being

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of a ſenſual or a wordly Nature, that they are known not to be attainable, till by death, the Senſes and Bodies themſelves, and all the merely animal Faculties be aboliſh'd, for a Heaven ſo conſider'd, I ſay, to forego readily all the pleſures of the Senſes, and undergo cheerfully all the hardſhips and dangers that are wont to attend a Holy Life, is, *Lindamor* ſuch a kind of Mercinarineſs, as none, but a Reſigned, Noble, and Believing Soul, is likely to be guilty of. If I ſhould ſay that fear it ſelf, and even the fear of Hell, may be one juſtifiable Motive of Mens actions, though I ſhould propoſe, what thoſe I am reaſoning with, would think a Paradox; yet I ſhould perhaps, hold forth therein no more than the Scripture does, *Let us there-fore fear*, (ſays the Writer to the Hebrews) *leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his reſt, any of you ſhall ſeem to come ſhort of it.* And no leſs eminent an Herald of the Goſpel than St. *Paul*, who ſucceſsfully maintain'd the Evangelical againſt the Legal Spirit, thus profeſſeth of himſelf. *I keep under my body, and bring it unto ſubjection, leſt by any means, when I have Preach'd to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-a-way.* And 'twas not to Slaves or Hirelings, that

Heb. 4. 1.

1 Cor. 9. 27.

that Christ directs this admonition, *I say unto you,* my Friends, *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear, fear him, which after he hath kill'd, hath power to cast into Hell*; *Yea, I say unto you,* (a gemination, which the present controversie shews not to have been causeless) *fear him.* Where the Paraphrase given of God, is not barely descriptive but ratiocinative (to borrow those terms of the Schools) in warning us not only whom we should, and should not fear, but why we should fear the one and not the other. As when St. *Paul* says, *I know whom I have trusted,* he means what manner of person, how *faithful* (as St. *Peter* elsewhere calls God) *and how omnipotent:* whence immediately he adds, *And I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* More Texts of the same Import might be added, if the Design of those already alledg'd were other, than to Facilitate the admission of the more plausible Truth we have been making out, and which to us seems very clearly held forth in those and the like Scriptures, which are therefore cited out of the New

Luk. 12. 4, 5.

1 Pet. 4, 19. 2 Tim. 1. 12.

New Teſtament, that they might have the greater Authority with one ſort of our Antagoniſts. *I preſs toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* Phil. 3. 1. 4
Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City. Rev. 22. 14
Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life. To them, who by patient continuing in well-doing, ſeek for (ζητοῦσι) *Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life.* 1 Tim. 6. 19.
And of Chriſt himſelf, whoſe Love to God is queſtionleſs Filial and Unequalable, 'tis ſaid, *Looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who, for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* Rom. 2. 17 Heb. 12. 2.
Nor ſee I why it ſhould be Unfilial for a Child of God to further the Raiſing of thoſe Paſſions, which his heavenly Fathers intends to have rais'd in him, upon the ſame Grounds and Motives that God is pleas'd to employ to excite them. And ſince the Scripture ſeems plainly to invite our hopes, by recording St. *Paul*'s having ſaid, *Every Man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate* 1 Cor. 9. 25.

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in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible. And by repreſenting our Saviour himſelf, as ſaying in one place, *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven*; In another, *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* And in divers others ſpeaking to the like purpoſe; Since, I ſay, the Scripture ſeems thus to allure our hopes, would it not be a kind of accuſing it of an aptneſs to delude and enſnare us, to teach, that it propoſeth to us the powerfulleſt objects to incite our paſſions, if it be ſinful to cheriſh and harbor the paſſions naturally belonging to thoſe objects? and certainly, *Lindamor*, ſince God, who, as our Creator, knows the Frame and Conſtitution of Man's Soul, incomparably better than he himſelf, is pleas'd to deal with our Hopes and our Fears, to engage us to his Service: It very ill becomes us, either to quarrel with his Methods of working on our Spirits, or to reject any help which he has been pleas'd to afford a Piety, which for ought ever I could obſerve, does even in the beſt Men find reſiſtance enough to keep any help that can be employed to promote it from being ſuperſtitious.

Mat. 5. 12.

Rev. 2.

ſtituous. And truly, the animating or diſcouraging influence, that Hope, or the want of it, is wont to have upon our endeavours, makes me very apprehenſive, that ſince the enlivening hopes of Heaven are not able to make moſt mens endeavours, other than very Languid, the forbidding thoſe ſupporting hopes would ſoon weaken and decreaſe our endeavours into none at all.

But, *Lindamor*, though I may perhaps have taken ſome pains in ſtudying Controverſial Divinity, yet I take ſo little pleaſure in writing of it, that though not only ſeaſonable Duty to truth, but a neceſſary one to the enſuing part of this Diſcourſe, have preſſed me to ſerve in this Cauſe; yet I ſhall perhaps obtain your pardon ſooner than my own, for having thus long ſuſpended the diſcourſing to you of the *Advantageouſnes* of God's love to us, as it gives us here a Right, and will hereafter give us admiſſion, to Heaven; Heaven! the bright Seat of ſo much happineſs, that we ſhall ſcarcely count amongſt our Joys, that Heaven is the ſeat of them. There the Excellency of the poſſeſſed Goods ſhall as much diſappoint our expectations, as in other fruitions the emptineſs is wont to do. *Sect.* 20.

do. The Apoſtle tells us, that *Eye hath*
1 Cor. 2. 9 *not ſeen, not Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Such pure refin'd Delights not only ſtoop not unto Senſe, but are ſublime enough even to tranſcend imagination. When Fancy hath form'd and ſhap'd the perfecteſt Ideas, that its abſtractions can make, of Bleſſedneſs; our own more happy experiences of greater, muſt diſabuſe us, when we come to Heaven; which is a ſoil, whoſe fruitfulneſs is ſo confin'd to Joy, that even our diſappointments and miſtakes ſhall there contribute to our happineſs; which will ſo much partake of his immenſity, whoſe Gift it is that you ſee the Apoſtle gives it a Negative deſcription: and to create in us apprehenſions underogatory from what we ſhall poſſeſs, not only removes our thoughts from all we do enjoy, but exalts them above all that we can fancy. At which way of proceeding, that you may the leſs wonder, *Lindamor*, be pleaſed to conſider, that in Heaven our Faculties ſhall not only be gratifi'd with ſuitable and acceptable objects, and conſequently our Capacities of Happineſs, as well encreas'd as fill'd

fill'd. A Child not yet releas'd out of the homely priſon of the Womb, cannot there poſſibly frame Ideas of thoſe delights, which will be afforded him by the pleaſing noiſes, and the glittering objects that will preſent themſelves to him after his Birth. And the ſame Child whilſt he continues in his Nonage, though he may with delights look upon Emblems finely drawn and painted, and may take ſome pleaſure in beholding the neat and ſurprizing Characters and Flouriſhes of a Greek and Hebrew Bible curiouſly Printed; yet he cannot then immagine the pleaſure the ſame objects will afford him, when Age and ſtudy ſhall have ripened and inſtructed his Intellectuals, and made him capable both of underſtanding and reliſhing the excellent Moralities, couch'd in thoſe ingenious Emblems, and the profound and ſaving Myſteries, wherewith that Divine Book, the Scripture, (eſpecially in its original Tongues) does to an Intelligent and Religious Peruſer, appear repleniſh'd. Such a double advantage, *Lindamor*, among others, the Admiſſion into Heaven brings thoſe, to whom that Bleſſing is vouchſaf'd: For, beſides that ſet of Objects (if I may ſo ſpeak) ſo

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new and ſo particular to Heaven, that their Ideas could never enter into Men's thoughts before their admiſſion there; beſides this, I ſay, our then enlarg'd capacities will enable us, even in objects which were not altogether unknown to us before, to perceive things formerly undiſcern'd, and derive thence both new and greater ſatisfactions and delights. Wonder not, *Lindamor*, that in mentioning the joys of Heaven, I uſe the expreſſions I find leſs detractory from a Theme, as much above our Praiſes, as the Heaven they are enjoy'd in is above our Heads. For, though ſuch expreſſions may ſeem ſomewhat Tumid and Aſpiring, and fitter much for one that celebrates, than for one that but aſſerts: Yet cannot I ſcruple to uſe ſeeming Hyperboles in the mention of Felicities, which make the higheſt Hyperboles but ſeeming ones. For thoſe Joys, *Lindamor*, of Heaven, are like its Stars, which by reaſon of our remoteneſs from them, appear extremely little, though really in themſelves they are ſo vaſt, that a leſs than the largeſt is by odds greater than the biggeſt object upon Earth, nay, than the whole Earth it ſelf And therefore as if I were to take you with me to contemplate

template the Planets, I would ſhew you them through ſuch a Teleſcope, as by a greatning thoſe bright Objects in compariſon of what to unaſſiſted Eye they appear, doth ſomewhat leſſen the diſadvantage of Remoteneſs, and ſhews them with leſs detraction from their true Magnitude; ſo mentioning to you the Felicities of Heaven, I think it not unlawful or Improper to endeavour, by repreſentations, tranſcending what they appear, to give you Notions leſs inferior to what they are.

In Heaven, then, we ſhall taſte happineſs enough, to enable us to rectifie the Definition of it. We may there be inſtructed how to Name and Rate all Goods by thoſe that will Concentre into the Felicity we ſhall poſſeſs, which ſhall be there made up of the Confluence, Perfection, and Perpetuity of all true Joys. For, Heaven will make us happy, not (as Philoſopy pretends to do) by the Confinement, but by the Fruition of our Deſires: which ſhall neither fail in the choice of their Objects, nor miſs of the enjoyment of them; but be, both unerringly Juſt, and infallibly Accompliſh'd: In the former of which Properties, (as our then Rectifi'd Reaſon will conſider things) *Sect.* 21.

we ſhall think our ſelves happier (yet) than in the latter. We ſhall there eſemble the Saints we here Admire, and ſhall not only See, and be like thoſe pious Worthies, whoſe virtues Eclipſe theirs, which among the Heathen Deifi'd leſs deſerving Heroes; thoſe excellent Perſon that did as well Ennoble as inſtruct Mankind, giving us cauſe to Glory, and to Bluſh that we are Men, and whoſe Stories have the unparallell'd Honor of being recorded by Inſpir'd Pens; Thoſe *Spirits*, I ſay, *of juſt Men made perfect*, as the Scripture terms them, ſhall be our conſtant and familiar Company, into whoſe bleſſed Society we ſhall not only be Welcome, but Encreaſe it. In Heaven, we ſhall have a bleſs'd and familiar Converſation with thoſe ſame glorious Spirits, whoſe Nature doth inveſt them with ſuch a Luſtre, that all the Diſadvantage of their Diſguiſes, when they Appear to us, doth ſcarce ſuffice to confine our Raptures to reſpects below Idolatry, and darken them into Objects for our Wonder, not Adoration. There we ſhall ſee (a Sight worthy dying that Bleſſed Saviour, of whom the Scripture does ſo much, and ſo excellently entertain us, and who having done and ſuffer'd ſo much for us, does ſo highly deſerve of us, both

Heb. 12. 23

both upon the ſcore of his infinite perfections, and upon the account of his ineſtimable Benefits. Yes, there ſhall we ſee that Holy and Divine Perſon, who, when he vouchſaf'd (as his Favorite-Diſciples ſpeaks) *to pitch his Tent among us*, and dwell with Men on Earth, to fit them by his Merits and Example to dwell with him in Heaven, did ſo admirably mix an awful Majeſty with an humble meekneſs, and the aſſum'd Infirmities of his human Nature, with the ſeaſonable Corruſcations of his Divine; and expreſs'd in his whole life, ſo perfect and exemplary a Virtue, and yet ſo much Sweetneſs and Gentleneſs towards thoſe Aſpirers to it, that they were the moſt ſhort of it; that the Jews themſelves could ſay of him, That, *He had done all things well*; and his very Enemies, that were employed to apprehend him as a Malefactor, confeſs'd even to thoſe that ſent them to do ſo, That *never man ſpake like him*. And his Apoſtles, who had moſt opportunity to pry narrowly into his Actions, and were of a condition and breeding very unlike to infuſe into them Heroick Reſolutions, did, in ſpight of the frequent reproofs their failings extorted from him, and of the hardſhips that attended his ſervice, think even death it ſelf in his Company,

Joh. 1. 11

Mat. 7. 37.

Joh. 7. 46.

more Eligible, than life led out of it; *Let*
Joh.11.16. *us also go that we may die with him* (says even the distrustful *Thomas* to his fellow Disciples.) But, *Lindamor*, we shall there see the
Phil.2.7. Son of God, not in that *Form of a Servant*, which he put on, that he might suffer for us, and exercise his Priestly and Prophetick Function here below; but in that Regal State and Condition, which belongs to him by Virtue of his Kingly Office; on whose score he is stiled in the Scripture, *King of*
Rev.19.16 Mat.28.18 *Kings, and Lord of Lords*, all power and Authority being (as himself speaks) given him both in Heaven and in Earth. And, how Nobly attended may we suppose this Divine Monarch to be in his Exalted Condition in Heaven; when in his state of Humiliation on Earth, whilst he was in the *Wil-*
Mat.4.13. *derness among the Wild Beasts, the Angels* are recorded to have *ministred unto him*; and
Luk.2. whilst he lay swath'd in a homely Manger, the multitude of the Cœlestial Host were heard to solemnize his miraculous Birth, according to that Passage of the Wri-
Heb.1.6. ter to the Hebrews, *When he bringeth the first begotten into World*, (he saith) *And let all the Angels of God worship him!* And yet such considerable and noble Creatures, those immaterial Intelligencers, called Angels,

are

are, that One of them in one night was able to deſtroy above a hundred and four-ſcore thouſand Men, in the blaſphemous *Senacherib's* impious Camp. And ſo much Majeſty and Superiority, does their Nature give them, in reference even to the eminenteſt of Mortals, That, when the undaunted *Joſhua* had boldly challeng'd one of them, that appear'd to him in the likeneſs of a Man, and emanded whom he was for; when he knew him to be an Angel, (unleſs he ſuppos'd him to be that promis'd Meſſiah, who is elſwhere call'd *the Angel of the Covenant*, as it is in the Original, and in the ſame Text *the Lord*) he alters his Addreſs unto him in this ſubmiſſive one, *What ſaith my Lord unto his Servant?* And even Wiſe and Holy *Daniel* himſelf, who was the ſecond perſon of the World for Power, and the firſt for much nobler Attributes, Wiſdom, and Underſtanding, who ſaw ſo many Governors of vaſt Provinces, and Profeſſors of admired Magick, inferior to himſelf; yet confeſſes to the Angel, that appear'd to him, that he was confounded and diſanimated at his Preſence, and adds, *How can the Servant of this my Lord, talk with this my Lord?* We may ſafely therefore expect, that we ſhall then behold our

2 Kings 19. 35.

Mat. 3. 1.

Joſh. 5. 13. 14.

Dan. 10. 17.

Saviour, not in thoſe diſguiſes which diſſigur'd him in their Eyes, that only conſider'd his Sufferings, but in that triumphant Condition, wherewith they are now no warded. The Thorns of his (now nomore Galling, but adorning) Crown will appear upon that Radiant Head of his, more Glorious, than thoſe of the flaming Buſh, wherein God appear'd to
Exod. 3. 2. *Moſes.* And we ſhall not ſee that deſpicable Form, which made the Prophet ſay, perſonating the generality of the Jewiſh
Iſa. 53. 2. Nation contemporary with the Meſſias(---*He hath no Form nor Comelineſs, and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no Beauty that we ſhould deſire him.* But we ſhall ſee him encompaſs'd with ſo much Majeſty, and ſhining with ſo much of his Genuine Splendor and Beauty, that we ſhall deſervedly eſteem him *Nephle,*
Iſa. 9. 6. *the Admirable.* And our raviſh'd Souls ſhall by the more attentive contemplation of him, but find more cauſe to imitate the Spouſe in *Solomon*'s myſtick *Ephithalamium*; who having dwelt upon the Beauty of the ſeveral parts that concurr'd to the accompliſhing of the Divine Briedgroom, exclaims in an *Epiphonema*, very contrary to the expreſſion lately mentioned in the
Cant. 5. 10. Prophet. *He is altogether deſires*, or by an Hebraiſm

Hebraiſm, *moſt deſirable*, which our Engliſh renders, *He is altogether lovely.* His Eyes will there appear as St. *John* repreſents them, of Active Fire, and will into the willing Breaſts of the raviſh'd Beholders, ſhoot Flames as Pure, as Holy, and as deathleſs as thoſe Fathers of the Church, who believ'd not the Angels altogether Incorporeal, may be ſuppos'd to have conceived the Seraphims to conſiſt of. Certainly, ſince (as the Scripture informs us) *It never entred into the heart of man, what God has reſerv'd in Heaven for thoſe that love him*; That Glory can be but imperfectly expreſs'd by the bare Epithet of Inconceivable, with which God rewards the meritorious Sufferings and Obedience of that only begotten Son of his Love, for whoſe ſake he is pleas'd to confer on ſo many thouſands of Men, unimaginable Glories. He that vouchſafes ev'n to many of his Servants a brightneſs like that of the Stars, will ſure communicate a more radiant Luſtre to the *Son of Righteouſneſs*, that only Son of His, *whom* (to borrow inſpir'd expreſſions) *he hath made Heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the Worlds: who being the brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his*

Rev. 1. 14

Mal. 4. 2.

Dan. 12. 3.

Heb. 12. 3.

Eph. 1. 11. *power, when he had by himself purg'd our sins, sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, far above all Principality and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.* Thereby exalting him, not only above all Earthly Princes and Potentates, but even above the highest Orders of the Spirits of Cœlestial Hierarchy.

Sect. 19. But apprehend not, *Lindamor*, that this sublime Exaltation of Christ will make him despise the meanest of his Saints,

Phil. 2. 7. or disdain Communion with him. For, St. *Paul* assures us, That he was in the *form of God*, when he vouchsaf'd to take upon him the form of a Servant, to make us free; and sure, he that condescended so far, and stoop'd so low, to invite and bring us to Heaven, will not refuse us a Gracious Reception there. In the days of his Flesh he was pleas'd to own *Lazarus*, even in the dishonors of the Grave, and vouchsaf'd him in that despicable condition the Glorious Title of his Friend. And when he descended the Mount of

Luk. 19. 37. 38. 41 Olives, all the loud Acclamations of the glad Multitude, that sang *Hosanna's* to him, and strew'd his way with their Palms, their Vestments and their Praises, could not

not divert him from Deploring, even with Tears *Jeruſalem*'s approaching Fate; and expreſſing in the midſt of his Triumphs a Concern, for the very worſt and ſturbborneſt of his Enemies. And, leſt it ſhould be thought, that he was thus concern'd for worthleſs Mortals, only Whilſt he Shar'd and Felt the Miſeries of their Condition; give me leave to obſerve to you, *Lindamor*, that immediately after his Reſurrection, whilſt the Senſe of the ſudden and unexampled change of his Condition was freſh upon him, and the Remembrance of the Apoſtle's Ingratitude in deſerting him, almoſt as Recent; he ſticks not to give thoſe very Diſciples that forſook him, the glorious Title, (and that a more familiar one than we find him to have allow'd them on Earth) of *his Brethren*; and particularly ſhews himſelf Solicitous for that *Peter*, who, in ſpight of all thoſe empty boaſts, wherewith he not only ſeem'd to defie Death, but Chriſt's Prediction too, did not only forſake his Maſter, but deny'd him. He can in Heaven be ſo concern'd for his diſtreſſed Members here on Earth, that not only he can take notice of expiring *Stephen*, thorrow that Cloud of fatal Stones that batter'd down his Priſon: and can, when *Saul* was perſecuting

Mar. 28. 10
Mat. 16. 7.
Act. 7.

cuting the vulgar Christian, cry out unto
Act. 9. 5. him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* as if
He, and those that Love him, where but
In the second and Third Chapters *Apocalyps* One: But in the Messages he sends to the Angels or Governors of the seven Churches, he sufficiently manifests, That single Christians may be as particularly in his Thoughts, as if they had no other Object: His Greatness will not make his Kindness less familiar, but only more Obliging: He disdains not, even after his Ascension, to
Rev. 3, 20 say, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* That King, in the Parable, by whom himself is represented, is pleased himself to welcome each Individual trusty Servant
Mat. 25, with a peculiar, *Euge, bone Serve*; And in another Parable he scruples not to represent the great condescensions and familiarity, wherewith the Lord shall remunerate the faithful and watchful Servants, by telling
Luk. 12 37. his Disciples, *Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so watching. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.* At which expression, you will the less admire, if you consider, that besides that it is

parabo-

parabolical, and probably hyperbolical, and therefore not to be taken (as the French ſpeak, *au pied de la lettre*) in a ſtrict ſence: We find in the Evangelical Story, that our Saviour diſdain'd not to converſe familiarly with Publicans and Sinners, nor even to waſh the Feet of his Diſciples: And ſince he condeſcended to ſuch Familiarity to thoſe frail Mortals, ſo many of whom were apt to turn the favours of God into Wantonneſs, we may the leſs admire his gracious condeſcenſions to thoſe, the Sinleſſneſs of whoſe condition will keep them from turning his vouchſafements into any thing, but occaſions of Joy and Gratitude. Marvel not, *Lindamor*, as at an impertinency, that I appear ſo ſolicitous to poſſeſs you with high apprehenſions of the ſuper-eminent Dignity and Felicity of our exalted Saviour; and that in the loftieſt and moſt magnificent expreſſions, the Scripture affords me, I have endeavoured to make out to you, that the bright Son of Righteouſneſs is now grown uncapable of ſuffering Eclipſes, but ſhines with unclouded and unequal'd Splendor; and that we ſhall in Heaven (as the Writer to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks) *See Jeſus, who was made a little* (or for a ſhort while, βραχύ τι) *lower than the Angels*, Heb. 2. 9.

gels, for the ſuffering of Death, crown'd with Glory, and Honour. For it will make Heaven more Heaven to us, to find him reigning there, who hath ſuffer'd ſo much for us; and for whom, if we e'er come thither, we ſhall have ſo much ſuffer'd. For, ſince our Love will, as the reſt of our ſurviving Graces, be perfected and grow compleat in Heaven; the ineffable Happineſs of our dear Redeemer muſt needs bring an encreaſe to ours, commenſurate to the Ardency of our Love for him, and we ſhall reliſh no Happineſs more than that; which is therefore ours, becauſe he is happy, and ſuppoſes in him, what it confers on us. Beſides that, ſince the Regal Dignity; wherein (as Mediator) he is Inſtated, may make us owe our Salvation to his Sentence, as well as to his Merits; Heaven it ſelf will be ineſtimably endear'd to us, by our enjoying it upon his account. I need not tell you, what a value Lovers are wont to ſet upon the leaſt favours that can be beſtowed on them by their Miſtreſſes, and that oftentimes a worthleſs Ribband, a Bracelet of Hair, or ſome ſuch Trifle, that nothing can make precious but her preſenting it, is highlier valued by the tranſported Lover, than the richeſt Preſents of Nature, or of Fortune. How great a Bleſſing

Bleſſing muſt it then be, *Lindamor*, to owe Joys that need not endearing Circumſtances to merit the name of Happineſs, to a Perſon ſo beloy'd. that even Heaven it ſelf will bring more Felicity to the amorous Soul, as it is a proof of his Love, than that it is a Donative of his Bounty. As paſſionate Brides do incomparably more value the Wedding-Rings which their glad Lovers give them, as Pledges than as Gold. 'Tis ſaid of the perſecuted and diſgraced Apoſtles, that *they rejoyced to have been counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his Name.* Act. 5. 41. But if they deſervedly rejoyc'd to be allowed to ſuffer for him; of how much Joy ſhall they have juſt cauſe, that are admitted to Reign with him? his having ſupported the Hardſhips and the Toyls (for I muſt not now call them Evils) to which our afflicted Condition of Mortality is expos'd, does ſo much Alleviate them, and refreſh us under them, that in this ſenſe alſo it may be truly ſaid, that *the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and by his hurts we are healed.* Iſa. 53. 5. But he that reliev'd us even by his Croſs, will ſure do more for us by his Crown, when he ſhall admit, and even invite, each faithful ſervant to no leſs a Bleſſing, than *to enter into his Maſters Joy.* Mat. 25. 21

So

So rich a Source of Happineſs did Chriſt deſign to make himſelf to us in all his capacities and conditions, that in Heaven and in Earth, it was, and will be, his gracious and conſtant imployment, to ſhare our Griefs, or impart to us his Joys; and either leſſen our Miſeries by his Sufferings, or increaſe our Happineſs by his Felicity.

Sect. 23. Expect not, *Lindamor*, that I ſhould ſolemnly beg your pardon for this ſeeming Excurſion, till I come to think it a digreſſion, to inſiſt on the Bleſſedneſs of Chriſt in Heaven, treating of the Happineſs which thoſe that love him will enjoy there. Wherefore, not to ſpend time in imploring a needleſs forgiveneſs, I ſhall proceed to tell you, *Lindamor*, that in Heaven we ſhall not only ſee our elder Brother Chriſt, but probably alſo our Kindred, Friends, and Relations, that living here in his Fear, died in his Favour. For

Luk. 20, 36. ſince our Saviour tell us, that the *Children of the Reſurrection ſhall be* ἰσάγγελοι, *equal to*, or like *the Angels*, who yet in the Viſions of *Daniel* and St. *John*, appear to be acquainted with each other: ſince in the

Luk. 16. Parable of the miſerable Epicure, and the happy Beggar, the Father of the faithful is repreſented, as knowing, not only the Perſon,

ſon, and preſent condition, but the paſt Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Inſtructer of the Gentiles, confidently expects his Converted and Pious *Theſſalonians*, to be *his Crown at that great day*; When the *having turned many to righteouſneſs*, ſhall, as the Scripture foretels, conferr Star-like and immortal brightneſs. Since (which is chiefly conſiderable) the knowledge of particular actions, and conſequently, perſons, ſeem requiſite to the attainment of that great end of God, in the day of Judgment, the manifeſtation of the Punitive and Remunerative Juſtice: ſince, I ſay, theſe Arguments, beſides divers others are, afforded us by the Scripture? we may ſafely conclude it probable, that we ſhall know each other in a place, where, ſince nothing requiſite to happineſs can be wanting, we may well ſuppoſe (at leaſt, if we can imagine here, what we ſhall think there) that we ſhall not want ſo great a ſatisfaction, as that of being knowingly happy in our otherſelves, our Friends. Nor is this only probable, *Lindamor*, but 'tis not improbable, that thoſe Friends that know us in Heaven, ſhall welcome us thither. For, ſince Chriſt aſſures us, that the very Angels (though they be ſo far from being related

1 Theſſ. 2. 19, 20. Dan. 2.

to

to our persons, that they are Foreigners to our very Nature) receive accession of Joy for a relenting Sinner, that by repentance begins to turn towards God; you will not think it absurd, that in a place where Charity shall not only continue (as St. *Paul* speaks) but grow perfect, our dear Friends should rejoyce to see us, not only begin to turn towards God, but come home to him. Nor is it unlikely, that our transported Souls shall mutually congratulate each other, their having now fully escaped the numerous Rocks, and Shelves, and Quicksands, and threatning Storms, and no less dangerous Calms, through which they are at length arrived at that peaceful Haven, where Innocence and Delight (which are here so seldom matcht) are inseparable Companions, both of each other, and each Blessed Resident. With those Friends we here lamented, we shall there rejoyce. And 'twill be but need, that the discovery of each others Virtues should bring us to a mutual knowledge of our persons; for otherwise we shall be so chang'd, that we should never know our Friends; and should scarce know our Selves, were not an eminent encrease of knowledge a part of that happy change.

Luk. 15. 7.

1 Cor. 13. 8.

For

For those departed Friends, whom at our last Separation, we saw disfigured by all the ghastly horrors of Death, we shall then see assisting about the Majestick Throne of Christ, which their once *vile Bodies transfigured into the likeness of his glorious Body*, mingling their glad Acclamations with the Hallelujahs of Thrones, Principalities, and Powers, and the most dignifi'd Favourites of the Cælestial Court. I need not tell you, *Lindamor*, that we shall be more justly transported at this Meeting, than was good old *Jacob* at that of his Son *Joseph*, whom having long mourn'd for dead and lost, he found not only alive, but a great Favourite, ready to welcome him to an unknown Court. For, whereas the Patriarch said to his Son, *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face*; the seeing of our Friends in Heaven will assure us, that we shall for ever Live with them there. The Re-union of Friends being there as privileg'd from Divorce, as that of Soul and Body, (which scarce will be more strict and satisfactory.) For, here indeed, if our Friends do not allay our Love or Affection by unwelcome Actions, or their contagious Sufferings, we commonly dote on them to a Degree, that, as it were, Re-

Phil. 3. 21

Gen. 46. 30.

duces God to deprive us early of them, and ſnatch our Idols, and his Rivals, from us. But there, our, on both ſides, compleated Graces, will not only Deſerve, but Allow a higher Strain of Friendſhip. The near Contemplation and Fruition of the infinitely tranſcendent Perfections of the Creator, keeping all our Kindneſs to the Creatures, not only ſubbordinate to the Love we owe to God, but grounded On it; as Excited Needles, when they ſtick faſteſt to each other, owe their Union to their having both been touched by the Loadſtone; to which, they have therefore Both of them ſtronger Inclinations, than Either to the Other.

Sect. 24. There, probably, we ſhall ſatisfactorily underſtand thoſe deep and obſcure Myſteries of Religion, which, the profoundeſt Clerks that love not to flatter themſelves, acknowledge, they are unable fully to Comprehend; being after all the Toyl and Induſtry of their anxious Enquires, reduc'd to ſit down with the Apoſtle's ὦ βάθος in Admiration of that Depth, whoſe Bottom they cannot Fathom. There we ſhall underſtand, thoſe obſcure paſſages of (That Divine Book and uncapable of Flattery) the Scripture, which notwithſtanding all that Bold Cri-

Rom. 11. 33.

ticks,

ticks, and Learn'd Expoſiters have attempted to illuſtrate it, does ſtill continue, in many Places, Obſcure There, diſcerning how exquiſitively the ſeveral Parts of Scripture are fitted to the ſeveral Times, Perſons, and Occurrences, wherein their All-foreſeeing Author intended moſt to uſe them; we ſhall diſcern not only a Reconcileableneſs, but a Friendſhip, and perfect Harmony, betwixt thoſe Texts, that here ſeem moſt at Variance, and ſhall diſcover not only the Senſe of the obſcurer Paſſages, but the Requiſiteneſs of their having been written ſo obſcurely: That ſtrange and peculiar, as well as otherwiſe cryptical Method and Stile of Scripture, which often coſt us ſo much ſtudy to find it Rational, we ſhall there diſcover to be admirable and worthy of its Omniſcient Author. There, I hope, we ſhall have clearly Expounded to us thoſe Riddles of Providence, which have, but too often, tempted even good Men, to queſtion Gods conduct in the Government of the World; whilſt the Calamities and Perſecutions of Virtue, and Innocence, ſeem approv'd by him, who accumulates Proſperities on their criminal Oppoſers. There, we ſhall be convinc'd; that all theſe ſeeming irregula-

rities, which the Heathen thought fit to impute to the giddy Whimſies of a blind Female Deity, are not only conſiſtent with God's Juſtice and Goodneſs, but are Productions of it. And though ſuch a Belief does here, to inteligent perſons, ſeem perhaps a greater piece of Self-denial, than to refrain from Wine, or Gold, or Miſtreſſes; yet in Heaven it will appear as reaſonable as here we find it difficult. For, as *Bildad* ſpeaks in *Job*, *We are but of yeſterday, and know nothing, becauſe our days upon Earth, are but a ſhadow.* And the ſhortneſs of our Tranſitory Lives, not permitting us to continue long enough Spectators here, to ſee above a Scene or Two at moſt of that great Play, Acted by Mankind upon the Stage of the World; 'tis no wonder we are apt to harbor ſiniſter thoughts of the Contriver of a Plot, whoſe neither Beginning nor End we are acquainted with. Which yet is little leſs injurious, than 'twere to cenſure the lofty Tragœdian *Seneca*, or ſome other matchleſs Artiſt, having peruſed but a piece of ſome Tragedy, whereof the latter part never arrived at our view. But when once God's whole Plot (if I may ſo ſpeak) and Conduct in the Adminiſtration of the world, ſhall come to be diſclos'd; all thoſe Revolu-

Job. 8.9.

volutions and occurrences of Empires, States Families, and particular Persons, which Men are here so prone to quarrel with, will there appear so just, so requisite, and so seasonable, that those very things which here tempted us to deny God, will there engage us to praise him; and we shall not so properly be satisfy'd with his Providence, as ravish'd. But especially, we shall be transported with Wonder and Gratitude, when God shall vouchsafe to discover to his particular Servants, the Reasons of his Dispensations towards them, and make out to them, not only the necessity and Justice, but ev'en Mercifulness of those very Afflictions, that were most imputed to his Severity, (no stroke from God's Paternal Hand, either lighting sooner, or falling heavier, or staying longer, than the occasion that exhorted it, exacted) and convince them, that their Hopes were never disappointed, but to secure their Title to better things than those they hoped for; not their inferior Interests prejudic'd, but for the Advantage of the Supreme Ones. Yes, all that unwelcome Darkness, that here surrounded our purblind Understandings, will vanish at the dawning of that bright, and as St. *Peter's*

* Ex- 2 Pet. 3. 18.

* ἡμέρα ἀϊδιότης. * Expreſſion may be interpreted) Eternal Day; wherein, the Reſolution of all thoſe Difficulties which here Exercis'd (and perhaps Diſtreſs'd) our Faith, ſhall be granted us to Reward it. And I muſt profeſs to you, *Lindamor*, (as unfaſhionable as ſuch a profeſſion may ſeem in a Gentleman not yet Two and twenty) that I find the Study of thoſe excellent Themes, God's Word, and his Providence, ſo difficult, and yet ſo pleaſing and inviting that, could Heaven afford me no greater Bleſſing than a clear account of the Abſtruſe Myſteries of Divinity and Providence, I ſhould value the having my Underſtanding gratifi'd and enrich'd with Truths of ſo Noble and Precious a Nature, enough to Court Heaven at the rate of renouncing for it all thoſe unmanly Senſualities and trifling Vanities, for which inconſiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit the Intereſt of their Saviour ſo dearly bought them in it.

Still. 2. Nor ſhall we only converſe with Saints and Angels, but with that infinitely more glorious Deity, that made them, what they are, without at all impoveriſhing himſelf. In Heaven, we ſhall enjoy (its Maker) God, and *ſee him as he is*, who, (as the Scripture telleth us) ſhall then be *all in all*;

1 Joh. 3. 2. 1 Cor. 15. 28.

all: comprizing all the Goods, we value in the Creatures, as eminently and fully, as the Sun doth the Light that twinkleth in the Stars.

If one that was none of the leaſt of the Philoſophers, ſcrupl'd not to tell the Man that ask'd him, What he was born for, that it was to contemplate the Sun; If our beſt Naturaliſts themſelves, though the darkneſs that is here caſt upon things, and the dimneſs of our Intellectual Eyes, (which I remember *Ariſtotle* fitly compares to thoſe of an Owl at Noon-day) permit us to diſcern but very little of that Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, which he has expreſs'd in the Creation; are yet often tranſported and raviſh'd with a juſt Admiration of the Perfection he has diſplay'd in his Workmanſhip. If the wiſe Queen that came ſo far to viſit *Solomon*, was put almoſt into an Extaſie, by the Sight of his (though Wiſe, yet Humane) ordering of things; And if *Angels themſelves* (as St. *Peter* informs us) *deſire to look into the myſterious contrivances of God*, in order to Man's Redemption: How great a ſatisfaction *Lindamor*, may we juſtly conceive it muſt needs be, to be admitted to ſee ſo much of God, as Heaven will diſcover to us? eſpecially

Anaxagoras.

1 Pet. 1. 12.

since so much of our future happiness will consist in that Beatifick Vision, as the Schoolmen justly call it) that St. *John* concluded, that *we shall be like God*, because we *shall see him as he is*. And our Saviour himself parraphrases our Celestial Felicity by this Blessed Vision, where he says, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*: As on the other side, the Writer to the Hebrews employs the being deny'd the sight of the Divine Object, as a description of extreme wretchedness, in that Text where, having exhorted those to whom he writes, to *follow peace and holiness*; he adds, as the formidablest Menace which he could make use of, to deter them from slighting his exhortation, *without which, no man shall see the Lord*. And by this Vision our Saviour seems to describe the Happiness, even of Angels; where, forbidding the scandalizing of any those little Ones that believe in him; he adds, to enforce what he had said that *their Angels do always see the face of his Father in Heaven*. We shall so be taken up with the Contemplation and Fruition of that Glorious Object, (in whose Infinity all Goods are included and diffused) that Ages, numberless as the Joys that Beatifie Vision abounds with, will scarce afford

1 Joh 3. 2.

Mat. 5. 8.

Heb. 12. 14.

Mat. 18. 10.

us leiſure for a diverſion to any other pleaſures, than thoſe it ſelf creates. Which are ſo numerous and ſo entire, that we ſhall there deſire nothing that we have not, except more Tongues to ſing more Praiſes to him, or at leaſt a capacity to pay him greater Thanks for what we have. And even thoſe Deſires, God's Gracious acceptation will make, in being conceiv'd accompliſh'd; for otherwiſe Heavens Reſidents ſcarce know any other want, than that of need to wiſh: The compleat Bleſſedneſs of their Condition, reducing them to a happy uſeleſneſs of wiſhes, by affording them a full Præpoſſeſſion of all the Objects of Deſire. There time, like Fire, having deſtroy'd whatever it could prey on, ſhall at laſt dye it ſelf, and ſhall go out into Eternity; whoſe Nature is ſuch, that though our Joys, after ſome Centuries of Years, may ſeem to have grown elder, by having been enjoyed ſo many Ages, yet will they really ſtill continue new, not only upon the ſcores of their welcomneſs and Freſhneſs, but by their perpetually Equal (becauſe Infinite) diſtance from a Period. There, our Felicity ſhall always be the ſame, yet ever New. Wearineſs arguing imperfection, either in the Object, or the Appetite;

tite; the former of which is impoſſible in God, and the latter ſhall ceaſe in Heaven. Where our Felicity ſhall be ſo great, that Variety (it ſelf) ſhall not be needed as a Part of it. And, if Heaven do admit variety, it may be ſuppos'd ſuch an one, as ſhall conſiſt in a further Knowledge of the Firſt Object (God,) not a forſaking of it; and ſuch as ariſes from the fixt beholding of the changing-necks of Doves, or ſuch as we may ſee in the diverſify'd refractions of the ſame ſparkling Diamond. In God, there is (if I may ſo ſpeak) ſuch a various Identity, that the Fruition of him both ſatisfies and creates deſires; though That, without Satiety, and This, without Diſquiet. Other Delights, like the uſual Cloaths we wear, quickly grow Stale; and are ſoon worn out; whereas Celeſtial Pleaſures participate of the Prerogative of the Jews Garments in the Wilderneſs, of not impairing by being uſed Long. But as the amorous Needle, once joyn'd unto the Load-ſtone, would never uncompell'd forſake the inchanting Mineral; but after ages cling no leſs cloſely to it, than at the firſt moment of their Union: So do the Saints in Heaven, with the ſame Undiminiſh'd freſhneſs ever poſſeſſes their

Deut. 29 5.

Joys,

Joys, as if each moment were the first that they possess'd them in. And if their Happiness does not improve by lastinger Enjoyment, 'tis perhaps, but because it was at first uncapable of Increase. Or, if our Pleasures do admit accession, they shall receive it from our Assurance, that we shall taste them for ever, and perpetually repeat (or rather continue) the same renew'd Fruitions to an Eternity, endear'd by nothing more, than by the quiet leisure it will afford us undistractedly to employ it in celebrating of the Author's Praises; and in a condition, happier in that by it we grow past doing, than past Suffering Ill. In Heaven (in a word) our inexhausted Joys will be so numberless, and so immense, that we shall need, (as well as have) Eternity it self to taste them fully.

But *Lindamor*, it was not my Design to give you a particular Topography of this Cœlestial *Canaan*; but only in a few words to let you see, that *'tis a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, And though I acknowledge, I have given you but dark description (and sometimes rather Poetical than Chorographical) of what the Apostle stiles, *The Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. Yet since, to wher our Sect. 26. Col. 1. 12.

Long-

Longings, for Fruitive (or experimental) knowledge, it is reserv'd among the Prerogatives of being in Heaven, to know how happy we shall be, when There: and since, what the Scripture hath reveal'd of Paradise, seems meant rather to quicken our Obedience, than satisfie our Curiosity; I may for those purposes, have perhaps tolerably perform'd that Task (of Heavenly Topography) by the acknowledgments of my disability to do it worthily. I shall now only add this property of our expected Bliss, that the vast multitude of Partners does detract nothing from each private share, nor does the Publickness of it lessen Propriety in it. This Ocean of Felicity being so shoarless, and so bottomless, that all the Saints and Angels can not exhaust it: it being as impossible for an Aggregate of Finites, to comprehend or exhaust one Infinite, as 'tis for the greatest number of Mathematick Points to amount to, or constitute a Body. Our Neighbor-Regions do all enjoy the benefit of Light as well as We; yet we enjoy not less, than if they enjoy'd none. Indeed there is this difference between the Son of Righteousness and that of Heaven; that whereas the latter, by his Presence, Eclipses all

the

the Planets, (his Attendants;) the former though radiant with a much mightier ſplendor, will, by his Preſence, impart to his Saints; according to that of the Apoſtle, *When Chriſt, who is our Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in Glory.* So that the Elect in relation to this Sun, ſhall not be like Stars, which his ſhining obſcures and makes to diſappear; but like poliſh'd Silver, or well glaz'd Arms, or thoſe vaſter Balls of burniſh'd Braſs, the tops of Churches are ſometimes adorn'd with, which ſhine not till they be ſhin'd upon, and derive their glittering Brightneſs, and all the dazling Fire that environs and illuſtrates them, from their being expos'd (unskreen'd) to the Sun's refulgent Beams. *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine,* ſays every Saint (with the Spouſe in the *Canticles*) to his Redeemer. *David* ſays of them that put their truſt in God, *That he ſhall abundantly ſatisfie them with the fatneſs of his Houſe, and make them drink of the River of his Pleaſures:* As if he meant to inſinuate, that, As when a Multitude of Perſons drink of the ſame River, none of them is able to exhauſt it, and yet, each of them may have the full liberty of Drinking as much as he Can, or as much as he could, though none but Col. 3. 4. Cat. 6. 3 Pſal. 36. 6.

Him-

Himself should be Allow'd to Drink of it; So, whosoever enjoys God, enjoys him Wholly, or at least doth enjoy him so Entirely, in Relation to that Man's Capacity, that the Fruition of whatsoever rests unenjoy'd of God, is forbidden by the Immensity of the Object, and not the Præ-possession of his Rivals. The Angels, though of a Nature Differing from ours, and thereby plac'd above the personal Experience of our sufferings and infirmities, do yet so sympathize with us, that (as our Saviour informs us) they rejoyce at the repentance of a sinner. And though the Members of the Church-Militant, and those of the Triumphant, live as far asunder, as Heaven is from Earth, and are not more Distant as to Place, than Differing as to Condition; yet St. *Paul* reckons all the Saints to be but *one Family in heaven and in Earth.* If then the disparity of Residences, of Qualities, and of Conditions, cannot now hinder the Lovers of God from being so concern'd in one another; how much of endearing Kindness may we suppose, that they will Interchange, when both their Love shall be Perfected, and all those other Graces too that are proper to Cherish and Encrease it. For, the same Apostle, who

Luk. 15. 7.

Eph. 3. 15.

to

to assist us, to conceive the strictness of the Union both betwixt Christ and his Saints, and the Saints among themselves. He tell us, the *He is the Head, and they are his Body, and Members particular*; teaches us to make this Inference, That (to express his Doctrine in his own words) *If one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; and if one Member be honour'd, all the Members rejoice with it.* Yes, *Lindamor*, in that blessed Condition, our Wills being perfectly conform'd unto our Maker's, no Saint nor Angel can enjoy his Love without possessing a proportionate Degree of Ours. And then, since perfect Friendship appropriates to each Friend the Crosses and Prosperities of the other (as good *Barzillai* could not be highlier obliged by *David*, than by the King's Kindness to his Son) each several Beatitude in Heaven shall (in some sort concern the whole Society, and) be Ours. As Astronomers teach us, that the Earth receives Addition of Light by the Sun's Beams bestow'd upon the Stars, and from the Moon reflecting upon Her. And because our Personal Capacities are too too Narrow, to contain all that joy, we are (by the strange Arithmetick of Friendship) in a manner multiply'd into as many

1 Cor. 12. verse. 27. 28.

2 Sam. 19. 37.

ny happy Persons, as there are Saints and Angels blessed in Heaven. Our perfect union to our common Head, and mutual Communion with each other, applying and bringing home every Felicity of theirs to This Friendly and reciprocal Sympathy, teaching us each Glorifi'd Saints Blessedness, and him ours, by a blessed Circulation, which makes us encrease, by our resenting them, those joys (of others) whose encrease we resent. But my thoughts are engaged in so good a Company, *Lindamor*, that they keep me from considering how fast the hours pass, and have almost made me forgot, that the time which my occasions allow'd me for scribling to you, is so far spent, that not now at last to reprieve you from the persecution of my blunt Pen, were to be almost as injurious to my own affairs, as to your Patience. Hereafter yet I may possibly make you some amends for this, with Riper Discourses of the Nature and Duties, or (if you will) the Properties and Returns of this Love, to which I have hitherto presented you some Motives; To (the last of) which I might add, That our love to the Creatures is an Earnest, but to God 'tis a Title; the one makes us the Objects, but the other makes the Object ours;

That,

That since there is in Love so strange a Magick, as to transform the Lover into the Object lov'd; we ought to be extremely careful of the Dedication of a Passion, which, as it is plac'd, must either dignifie our Nature, or degrade it: And not to address to any lower (or, which is all one, to any other) Object, the highest Intensity of a Love, which cannot but stoop without our Degradation. And these I might expatiate on, and Recruit them with many other Motives, additional to those I have already insisted on; but that I may more properly reserve them to the Treatise of the Properties of that Love, whose Nature so partakes that of its Object, that there can hardly be produc'd more powerful Motives to it, than the Conditions of it. Since then (as I freshly intimated) I cannot but fear that your tir'd Patience, as well as my urgent Occasions, (though these will recall me to morrow Morning to my own Western Hermitage) doth at present summon me to leave you; and since I cannot do so in a happier place than Heaven, I shall suspend my farewels, only to beg you to believe, that so Noble a Motive of exalting Friendship, as the ambition of rendring mine a fit re-

turn for Yours hath ſo improv'd my Kindneſs, that my Affection, without wronging its Greatneſs, could not Expreſs it ſelf by any leſs Attempt, than this gaining you the greateſt, and the moſt Deſirable of all Goods, by Elevating (that Noble Harbinger of your Soul) your Love to Heaven: Whoſe Joys alone are not inferior to thoſe which the being made Inſtrumental to procure them you, would really Create in,

My dearest Lindamor,

From *Leeſe* this 6th of *Auguſt*, 1648.

Your Moſt Faithful,

Moſt Affectionate, and

Moſt Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

Advertiſement.

WHilſt *the* Fourth Edition *of the foregoing Treatiſe was upon Finiſhing, it happen'd, that a Devout and very Ingenious Friend of the Author's, having preſs'd to have the Peruſal of ſome* Occaſional Meditations *that lay by him, on ſeveral Subjects, met, among others, with that which follows; And finding the Subject to be of Affinity with what is rather Touch'd than inſiſted on, in the* 65*th* Page *of the paſt Treatiſe,* Touching Men's Inability to Praiſe God Worthily, *and having a great deal of Partiality for the Reflection, would needs have it annex'd as it was, to the newly finiſhed Edition: Notwithſtanding the Author's having too juſt Cauſe to urge, That, beſides the Imperfe-*

tions that are made neceſſary by the Sublimity of the Theme, ſuch Occaſional Papers, eſpecially His, are wont to have peculiar Unaccurateneſſes, as being deſign'd rather to Entertain the Writer himſelf, than any other Reader.

An

An Occaſional Reflection upon a

LETTER,

(Receiv'd in *April*, 1662.)

Containing an Account of what paſſed on the KING's Coronation-Day in a little Country Town.

I Need not, *Pyrocles*, after what we have been Reading, tell you, that the Writer of this Letter thinks, that both in what he has ſaid of the King, and in what He has done to Solemnize His Coronation, he has behaved Himſelf rarely well. For I doubt not, but you eaſily diſcern by his way of Writing, that he is highly ſatisfied with his Performances, and expects that he ſhall, if not be Thanked by the King, at leaſt, be mentioned in the News-Book. But 'twill, I fear, be requiſite to tell you,

that this honeſt Man is not alone of his mind; for being his Landlord's Bailiff, he is eſteem'd at that rate by his Neighbours, and look'd upon as a Man very conſiderable in his Pariſh; and is perhaps thought to have a right to Pity moſt of thoſe that do not admire what he has now been doing. And yet, You and I, who pretend not to be Courtiers, can, in his Rural *Encomiums*, and his ill-contrived way of Honouring his Prince, eaſily diſcover ſo much that might have been Mended, and ſo much that might be Laugh'd at, that, if the King, according to His wonted Graciouſneſs, vouchſafe his Action his Smiles, it muſt not be in conſideration of the ſuitableneſs of the Performances to the Occaſion, but, *partly* as they proceed from a Hearty, though, ill-expreſs'd, Loyalty and Love, and *partly*, as they afford Him a Subject of Merriment. And not only the nice Criticks, who have ſeen thoſe Magnificent Solemnities, and heard the Eloquent Panegyricks, wherewith the principal Cities and Aſſemblies in the Nation have thought they did but Part of what they ſhould; and not only thoſe Aſſiduous Courtiers,

tiers, who by the Honour of a nearer Acceſs have Opportunities (deny'd to others) of diſcovering thoſe Particularities that may beſt give a higher Veneration for a Great Perſon and a great Prince, to thoſe that are qualifi'd to diſcern and reliſh ſuch things; not only theſe, I ſay, will have a quite other Opinion of the Rural Praiſes, and Antique Ceremonies that were ſo well lik'd a hundred Miles from *London*; but this Country-man himſelf, if he were admitted to the Court, and bred a while there, would in time ſee ſo great a diſtance betwixt what he has done, and what a Perſon better bred might have done, that he could not remember without Bluſhes, what he now looks upon with Triumph.

And now I muſt on this occaſion confeſs to you, *Pyrcles*, that I have (on other Riſes) ſeveral times been revolving in my Thoughts, what the Angels think of thoſe Praiſes and Deſcriptions of God that Men deviſe, (for I intend not here to ſpeak of thoſe the Scripture ſuggeſts) and wherein we are moſt Applauded by others, and do oftentimes perchance Applaud our ſelves. For thoſe Cœleſtial Courtiers (if I may ſo call them)

have several Advantages to assist them in the Celebration of our common Master, which we poor Mortals want. For, First, They are free from those Selfish and Inordinate Affections, that too often hinder us, either from Discerning the Excellency of divers of God's Attributes and Ways, or from duly acknowledging it. They have no Sins to keep them from descrying the Justness of what he does; They have no Ingratitude to oppose the fuller Resentments of His Goodness; and they are not tempted, not to discern and adore His Wisdom, for fear they should appear Culpable for repining at His Dispensations. And indeed, their Longævity allowing them the full Prospect from end to end, of those intricate Transactions of Providence, of which short-liv'd Mortals do commonly see but a part; they are questionless far more satisfi'd with the incomparably better Contrivances they discern in the Management of humane Affairs, than we are with the Conduct or Plots of the most Skilfully written Plays and Romances. Besides, Those happy Spirits, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *they stand before God.* and that they *continually see His Face*, have by that Priviledge,

Luke 1. Mat. 18.

the

the bleſſed Opportunities of diſcovering in the Deity they Contemplate and ſerve, many Excellencies, which even They could never but by Experience have form'd any thoughts of; and they ſee in one another's Solemn Adorations and Praiſes, a way of Honouring the Object of them ſo much tranſcending the utmoſt of what We here aim at, that their Homages to their Creator may well be ſuppos'd of a far Nobler kind than ours. And laſtly, When I conſider, how much leſs unworthy Thoughts and Expreſſions touching Things Divine the ſame Perſon may have, when come to his full Maturity of Age and Parts, and whilſt he was but a Child in both; and when I conſider, how much more Advantageous Conceptions of the Wiſdom diſplayed in the Univerſe, and particularly in the Contrivance of a Human Body, one that is a true Philoſopher, and a skilful Anatomiſt, may have, in compariſon of a Man illiterate, and unacquainted with Diſſections: When, I ſay, I conſider theſe things, and compare the dim Twilight of Human Intellects in this Life, with that Clear and Radiant Light, which the Scripture aſcribes to Angels, I cannot but think, that, having to the

Pri-

Privilege of a much nearer Acceſs than is allow'd Us to contemplate God's Perfections, the Advantage of having incomparably more Illuminated Intellects to apprehend them with, they muſt frame otherguess Conceptions of the Divine Attributes, and glorifie the Poſſeſſor at anotherguess Rate, than is allowed to Thoſe, whoſe Underſtandings are ſo dim, and whoſe Reſidence is ſo remote from that bleſſed Place, where the Perfections they would Extol are moſt diſplay'd.

Aſſiſted by theſe and the like Advantages, *Pyrocles*, thoſe happy Spirits may well frame Notions, and employ expreſſions in honour of their Maker, ſo far tranſcending Ours, that, though the Angels Goodneſs keeps them, doubtleſs, from beholding them with Contempt; yet, we may well think, they look upon them with ſuch a kind of Pity, as that, wherewith great Wits and Courtiers look upon the Miſtakes and Imperfections of what they Did and Writ, when they were but Schoolboys; and as that, wherewith, when we ſhall be admitted to the Society of the Angels, we ſhall look back upon our former ſelves. No, *Pyrocles*, to Praiſe God is a Debt, which, though

though we ſhould ever be Paying, we muſt always Owe, not only becauſe the renewed Obligations will laſt as long as we; but becauſe, thô the entire Sum were *poſſible* to be paid, *we* have no Coyn of the Value that would be requiſite to make a Payment of that nature. 'Tis true indeed, that ſome men ſay much more than others upon a Subject, on which none can ſay Enough, and which, even *the Spirits of juſt men made perfect* can but imperfectly Celebrate. It may be too, that the Praiſes we pay to God procure Us ſome from Men, and perhaps even from Orators and Encomiaſts; and thô I hope no Man can ſo flatter himſelf, as to think he can Flatter what he can never do Right to; yet the Zealouſneſs of our Endeavours, and the Applauſe that others entertain 'em with, may perhaps tempt us to think, that becauſe in our Expreſſions we have ſurpaſt our ſelves, we have almoſt equal'd our Theme: as if to make our Praiſes too great for any other Subject, were ſufficient to make them great enough for God. But alaſs, how widely muſt we be miſtaken! ſince our Expreſſions, if we ſpeak ſence, can at beſt but fully repreſent our Conceptions, and thoſe being but the Notions of a Finite Creature, muſt Heb. 10.

muſt needs fall extremely ſhort of Perfections, which were not what they are, if they were not Infinite. No, *when* we have employ'd the loftieſt Hyperboles, and exhauſted all the celebrating Topicks and Figures of Rhetorick; *when* we have Dreſſed Metaphyſical Abſtractions in Poetick Raptures; *when* we have ranſack'd whatever things are moſt Excellent among the Creatures, and having Defæcated them, and Piled them up together, have made that heap but a Riſe to take our ſoaring flight from; *when* we have ſummed up, and left beneath our Expreſſions, all that we are here wont to acknowledge above them; nay, *when* inſtructed, as well as inflam'd, and tranſported by that
1 Tim. 6. 16. *Inacceſſible Light*, that is *Inhabited* by what we Adore, we ſeem rais'd and elevated above all that is Mortal, and above our ſelves, and ſay things, that nothing elſe could either inſpire or merit; even *then*, I ſay, thoſe expreſſions, which any otherwiſe applied, would be Hyperboles, do but expreſs our Devotion, not the Divine Object of it, and declare how much we Honour Him, rather than what He is. And indeed, none but the Poſſeſſor of an Infinite Intellect can be able to ſay, what the Poſ-

ſeſſor

ſeſſor of other Infinite Perfections deſerves to have ſaid of Him. And whatever zealous skill we praiſe God with, we do far leſs Honour him than Injure Him, if we think our aſpiring'ſt Praiſes can arrive ſo far, as I ſay not to *Reach*, but ſo much as to *Approach* their Subject.

But, let not this inevitable Impotence (*Pyrocles*) trouble or diſcourage us: thoſe Bleſſed Souls that *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*, do (as we are taught in the *Apocalypſe*) make it their Buſineſs, and find it their Happineſs, to ſpend a great part of their Eternity in extolling him, by whom they are plac'd in a condition, where they can have no employment but what is *Holy* and *Noble*. And even here low, be the praiſing of a God is Work, wherein we imitate, thô we do not equal the Angels, and are buſied in the ſame employment, thô not with the ſame skill. Nay, Heaven it ſelf exempts not its Reſidents from an Impotence which belongs to Creatures, not as they are imperfect ones, but as they are Creatures. Even the Members of the Church Triumphant do not triumph over this neceſſary Impotence; their Praiſes may need Pardon, even in a place where they can Sin no more; And they can expect but from God's Good-

Rev. 14.4.

Goodneſs, the Acceptance of thoſe Praiſes, that are Improv'd, as well as Occaſion'd, even by their being made Partakers of his Glory. Nay, even in the Prophet *Iſaiah*'s *Exſtatick Viſion*, the Seraphims themſelves that are introduced, as anſwering one anothers glad Acclamations to God, are likewiſe repreſented as Covering (out of reſpect) their Faces with their Wings. But, *Pyrocles*, as I was ſaying, this unavoidable Diſability to ſay things Worthy of God, need not at all trouble us; *ſince* we pay our Homages to one, whoſe Goodneſs our expreſſions can as little equal, as they can his other Attributes. He that Created us, will not Impute it to us, that we act but as Creatures; And *ſince* he has declar'd, that *where there is a willing Mind, a Man is accepted according to what he has, and not according to what he has not.* The Impotence I have been ſpeaking of, ought to bring us rather Joy than Trouble, ſince the infinite Diſtance betwixt us, without leſſening his favourable Acceptance of our Praiſes, ſuppoſes the boundleſs Perfections of him, whom thoſe Praiſes (through his Goodneſs) help to give us an intereſt in; And no Son would repine at his Royal Fathers Greatneſs, how immenſe

Iſa. 9. 2.

2 Cor. 8. 12.

menſe ſoever, being ſure, that Greatneſs would not leſſen his Kindneſs. For 'tis leſs Deſireable to be able to deſcribe the Power and Excellencies of him we have an Intereſt in, than to have an Intereſt in one, whoſe Power and Goodneſs exceeds whatever we can Say or Fancy of them.

To conclude, *Pyrocles*, *ſince* on the one ſide God is moſt truly ſaid in the *Scripture* to be ſo *Glorious, that he is Exalted above all Bleſſing and Praiſe*, and conſequently, though *I could* (to uſe St. *Paul*'s Phraſe) *ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels*, yet the higheſt things I could ſay of the Divine Perfections, muſt needs be therefore far below them, becauſe a Creature were able to ſay them. And, ſince on the other ſide, it is of Us Men, that God vouchſafes to ſay, *Whoſo offereth Praiſe, glorifieth Me*; and his tranſcendent Excellency is ſo far from being inconſiſtent with reſembling Graciouſneſs, that ſuch a Benignity is one of the moſt conſpicuous Parts of it; I will not forbear to pay my Praiſes unto one, whoſe Deſerving infinitely more than I can offer, keeps him not from Accepting as much leſs than he deſerves. But then I muſt not preſume to *fill my Mouth with his Praiſes*, without

Nehem. 9. 5.

1 Cor. 13. 1.

Pſal. 50. 23.

Senſibly

Senſibly acknowledging, that there is not any Subject, whereon my expreſſions can more want Eloquence, than on this Subject; even Eloquence it ſelf would want Expreſſions.

FINIS.